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WOMEN:

THEIR

CONDITION

AND

INFLUENCE IN SOCIETY.

BY

JOS. ALEX. SEGUR.

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH.

VOL. I.

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PREFACE.

THE proper study of mankind, I conceive, includes the study of both sexes. We ought not to confine our observations to one sex rather than the other, because if we presume that an absolute identity of passions, and inclinations, and dispositions exists, it may justly be affirmed, that in attempting to delineate the features of both, we have in fact produced a portrait of one only.

But it is more than probable, that neither ancient nor modern philosophers, at least with very few exceptions, have pursued this comprehensive design; on the contrary, by a singular partiality, they have represented man as the distinguished being, and have not even condescended

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to examine the attributes of that sex, which they considered as altogether subordinate to him. The poets, however, by way of compensation, have dedicated their effusions to the celebration of female beauty. But what do they teach us? Do we know women better, after hearing of the elegance of their form, and the fascinating charms that adorn them? It is not sufficient that we describe them; we must write their history. This is the task which I have undertaken: and in fulfilling it, I intend to pursue the middle path, as far as I am able, between those who contemn and traduce them, and those who adore them in the ardour of passion.

In the researches which I have made relative to the condition, the morals, the passions, and the influence of an oppressed sex, I have had no intention to weave a cloak for their errors and their foibles; I

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have merely attempted to unfold to view the virtues and the qualifications with which nature has deigned abundantly to endow them, and which contribute to our happiness, even more than to their own. It seems as if she had decreed the separation of this part of ourselves, with a view to re-union, still more conducive to our gratification, because effected through the medium of our affections, our pleasures, and our pains.

Women are, if I may use the expression, another soul of our being, which, although enveloped in a separate covering, accords most uniformly with all our sentiments, which they inspire; with all our desires, which they excite and participate; and with all our weaknesses, which they can commiserate, without yielding to their influence. If man be unhappy, he requires of his soul an energy to enable him to

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support the load of physical sufferings, and of moral evils, still more difficult to sustain. But as this assistance must originate within himself, it necessarily partakes of the dejection which pervades his whole being. Should he resort to his other soul, he then feels how much the women deserve his admiration; these women, who approach him in enchanting forms, and administer an unexpected balm to his sorrows; and who make him sensible, in every particle of his being, that, although they appear distinct from himself, yet they are himself nevertheless. He observes these divinities of the earth unceasingly near him, who make him anticipate consolation, even before it is offered; whom he assents to at once, without waiting for the arguments of persuasion; and who seem to him an asylum against all misfortune.

But since we are endowed with

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corporeal strength, the women are born to slavery or submission. Dependent on our passions and caprices; awaiting the arbitrary decrees dictated to them by the forms of government, religion, morality, and the prejudices of men; here, adored as divinities; there, esteemed as companions and equals; and there again, condemned to servitude and contempt; under all these different circumstances we see them still retaining their characteristic distinctions, submitting with inexhaustible patience, and enduring with inconceivable fortitude. Their faults are not augmented under the pressure of distress and humiliation. And which of our qualities do they not possess? One alone, Anacreon says, has been denied them; and that is prudence. But as they are every where led themselves, and never, unless by a temporary usurpation, are able to assume the lead

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of others, they have less inducement to the exercise of foresight than the men. Their extreme sensibility, too, pleads their apology in this respect. Alive as they are to every impression that can excite their feelings, their situation is little calculated for the calm exertion of foresight; but, being always prepared to yield themselves up to the suggestions of the moment, they not unfrequently pass their lives in alternate action and repentance. Besides, as prudence is the result of reflexion, aided by experience, and reciprocally of experience matured and strengthened by reflexion, how should they attain the qualification? The difference of sentiment which authors have expressed respecting them, seems to lead to an inference in their favour, *Sophocles* affirmed that silence was their greatest ornament; and *Plato*, adopting the opposite extreme, proposed that they

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should join in the same occupations with the men. Among the moderns, M. de Condorcet considers them as capacitated for the affairs of politics; while M. de Saint Lambert condemns them to perpetual frivolities. And no doubt examples might be quoted, both in support and in refutation of both these modes of judgment.

But must we not infer from this diversity of opinions, that there is something extraordinary and inexplicable in the constitution of the sex, which renders them the subject of continual wonder and remark? The number of works which they have inspired seems to favour my idea; and I must observe, that the number of those who have written in their praise is much greater than that of their calumniators. Shall we deny them, with Saint Lambert, political talents? How much address and intelligence have they not evinced in important intrigues, and

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even in negotiation *? How many treaties, and unhoped-for alliances, of which the men received the honour; but the merit of which belonged to the women! How many great actions and great resolutions have been suggested and accomplished by them! What admirable enthusiasm have they not been able to excite, to lead on heroes to the brilliant exploits which themselves were incapable of executing, and when they could only console themselves for standing idle spectators, by the flattering right of binding the laurel on the temples of the brave!

If the men can boast of more prudence, the women have less egotism. How completely is *self* forgotten in their sentiments! The sacrifice is so accordant with their feelings, that, with the exception of a little vanity, they lay aside all consideration of themselves. In

* Witness the celebrated negotiation of *Pruth*, conducted by Catherine the First, and which procured safety to the person of the Czar, Peter the Great, and his whole army.

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short, so entirely do they devote themselves to others, that they have at length given reasons to believe that nature ordained the sacrifice; and hence all our laws oppress them, and of them are all privations required.

Among no people, even the most savage, have we seen the men obliged to offer themselves a sacrifice on the tombs of the women, as have been the women on the funeral-pile of their husbands *. And the history of men affords us no instance of an illustrious and voluntary victim of love, such as Dido, and many others that might be mentioned.

The extreme of feeling belongs essentially to this sex alone; and their sensibility can only admit of comparison with their patience and resignation.

Ever disposed to commiserate our

* Except among the Natches, where the women were sometimes the sovereigns.

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distresses, to participate in our joys, and to offer us every thing in their power; evincing only the fear of poverty in the means of assisting us; and, if we repulse them with ingratitude, after having experienced so many kindnesses, departing without a murmur or a reproach, yet ready to return at our call, if fresh misfortunes oppress us—Such are the generality of women.

In this view, how can we chuse but love them? In other respects, how can we cease to pity them? Withheld from the pursuits of any occupation, scarcely allowed to regulate the concerns of their own family, bringing us wealth which they never command, and presenting us with children who are not committed to their power; such is their condition. Let us not hesitate to say it; their existence resembles that of a conquered people, who can only hope to ameliorate their situation by the address they can em-

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ploy to please their masters, and to soften the injustice of their usurpation, and the severity of their caprices.

The design of my work is to demonstrate the equality of the two sexes, different as they may be; and to prove that every thing is compensated between them;—that if the one seems to be endowed with peculiar qualities, not possessed by the other, we cannot deny the other advantages equally to be valued;—that where corporeal strength is wanting, strength of soul supplies the deficiency;—that our domination over the female sex is but a continued usurpation;—that they have dexterously availed themselves of every opportunity of re-establishing, at least for a time, the balance between us;—that, in these moments of transient equality, they have evinced an ability for every thing, equal to ours;—and that, with the exception of in-

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ventive genius, their intellectual faculties, not inferior to our own.

I have endeavoured also to prove that many differences arise solely from education and custom: education modifies the nature of all beings.

Now, all that the moral nature of women may have lost by the improper direction of their infancy, ought to be imputed to the men. They compress or expand at their will the faculties of the women; and, with a provoking injustice, they assume the very obstacles, which themselves have raised to their improvement, as proofs of female inferiority.

I shall confute this pretension by some historical facts. And in endeavouring to trace back the condition of women, in all ages and among different people, I have judged it necessary to go back to the origin of the world, in order to ar-

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rive by successive steps at our own times.

Unquestionably such a labour required talents which I do not possess; but the subject itself, perhaps, is a sufficient plea for the indulgence which I must claim.

I shall pity that calm frigidity of soul, that can read, without interest, this essay on the history of a sex which has created the felicity of all ages; of a sex adored by youth, esteemed by mature age, and respected and cherished by the old, with the hope that it will afford a charm and consolation to his last moments.

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WOMEN,

&c.

ADAM AND EVE.

THE first woman was destined to be the companion of man, and his equal; to live by him and for him, to participate in his happiness and his pleasures, and share in the power which he exercised over the surrounding creation;—such was the situation assigned to her, by the Creator, near her husband, and such were the numerous and endearing relations established between the sexes. These relations served to unite two beings in one, and allowed two minds to have but one will; sometimes, indeed, they were permitted to have opposite inclinations, with a view of leading them to make by turns some

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sacrifices and mutual concessions, as the foundation of that ineffable felicity which it is impossible for man to describe, as God alone has been able to conceive it*. This delightful attachment, this tender union of minds, could not have existed without an equal participation of rights and of power. For as among the vast springs of the universe all is perfect harmony, and every thing is made to correspond, to be subservient, and in unison, so that no one part can control the other;—in like manner these two first of human beings, for whom so many wonders appear to have been produced, lived and loved, enjoyed the sweetest delights, and worshipped the Creator together; so that neither of them could form the idea of possessing the least authority and dominion over the other. We cannot but admire, likewise, the profound wisdom

* ———Vix liceat verbis attingere fatum,
Mentis opus divinæ.

PROSPER.

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of the eternal decrees in the equitable distribution of natural gifts between the two sexes. To one are allotted the powers of bodily strength, and to the other those of benignity and beauty. So long as they continued innocent, these powers constituted in each of them an equal capacity for the enjoyment of happiness; and after they had been reduced by their disobedience to a state of suffering and affliction they enabled them, with like efficacy, to struggle with calamity;—the one by a courage, perhaps more energetic, the other by that valuable quality of unwearied patience which seemed to exhaust the powers of the misfortune itself, rather than the energies of the mind it had aimed to depress. The first crime was, however, at length committed; and God, according to the Scripture, said to the woman, "Hitherto thou hast been the companion of man, but henceforth thou shalt be subject not only to the will, but also to the passions and

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the caprice of thy husband. He shall exercise over thee the superiority which is natural to his sex, and a perpetual sovereignty." From this period the social relations between man and woman have been altogether to the advantage of the former. The one has oppressed with superciliousness, the other has suffered with resignation. And from the age of the patriarchs down to the present time women have been no better than splendid slaves, who, like victims decorated with flowers, have proclaimed, by their fillets and garlands, the sacrifice to which they were doomed by those who ought rather to admire, esteem, and protect them.

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THE PATRIARCHS.

THE patriarchs dwelt in tents; their herds constituting their only wealth, and the cultivation of the ground their only occupation. They gave up every thing to the employments of this simple and peaceable life. To multiply their herds, and more and more to fertilize the earth, comprised the whole of their desires and ambition.

Some restlessness of spirit seems, however, in the mean while, to have prompted them to augment the number of their slaves, to enlarge and extend their families, and to generate and produce an endless succession of causes which superinduced new labours and avocations.

Here we may date the miseries of women; and hence originated among the patriarchs the custom of poligamy, the institution of divorce, as a remedy against barrenness, the introduction of

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concubinage, to increase population, and, finally, the total subjection of a sex which might have hoped for a more happy destiny among a race of mild, virtuous and intelligent men. Ought not the simplicity of their manners to have induced them to regard women rather as their companions and equals? Was it becoming in them so soon to depart from the example which, in the condition of the two first beings, had been set before them by the Almighty? But it seemed as if the fate of women had been determined. Rendered industrious by nature, labour was soon required of them as a duty; and they were condemned to all the petty drudgeries of domestic avocations.

The marriages, also, of the patriarchs already evinced how much they had debased this weak and defenceless sex. This union was then accompanied by no religious ceremony; it was simply a civil compact, and formed in the bosoms of their families. When

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virginity was no longer regarded as a virtue; when fruitfulness was esteemed as the most valuable quality, and barrenness as the greatest imperfection; when wives were considered as possessing no other advantage over concubines than the right of inheriting, which their legitimacy conferred on their children; when plurality of wives and concubinage, instead of being looked upon as libertinism, were resorted to as the best means of increasing population; we are almost tempted to compare the society of these ancient shepherds with that of the herds which they conducted. Such gross and brutal manners were as much calculated to debase the men who formed them, as the women who were, from their weakness, obliged to conform to them.

In order to form a just idea of the condition of women at this period, we may revert back to the marriage of Boaz and Ruth. At his first interview,

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and after once beholding his wife, Boaz permits her to approach him. She advances like a slave, and throws herself at his feet; whence she only rises to go and draw some water from a cistern.—It may be proper to observe, that these cisterns were so deep that to draw a pitcher-full of water out of them was a labour of the greatest difficulty, even for a slave.—Ruth, at length, arrives at the cistern, bearing a pitcher on her arm. It happened that one of Boaz's slaves had, by chance, been just drawing some water for his master. As soon as he perceived his new mistress he quitted his work, sat down with his arms folded, and allowed her to submit to a drudgery which belonged more particularly to her as a wife than even to the slaves themselves.

We may perceive the character of the patriarchs in the education of their females. It seems to have been confined to the making of woollen cloth,

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to the sewing together of sheep skins, and forming them into dresses destined for their future husbands.

There remains no trace which can inform us what were the first advances in the instruction of women. With regard to the men, having become too numerous to be able altogether to support themselves by fishing, or by the chase, they conceived the idea of increasing the number of their cattle; and this was doubtless the origin of the pastoral life.

The cultivation of the earth offered to them a certain resource: but they wanted implements of agriculture. The first that were wrought with fire were of copper, and invented by Tubalcain. These utensils were at first clumsy, but were gradually improved. Arts and professions afterwards arose by insensible degrees. But while the men were thus exercising their native industry, they beheld the women always condemned to slavery; and, with their

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faculties and imaginations enthralled, suffered to languish in that night of ignorance from which they were themselves seeking to emerge, but in which they obliged their companions to remain. All the institutions of that time served, in a humiliating manner, to remind the women of the unhappy rank they were designed to hold in society. Love, also, a passion scarcely felt, was confined to the attractions of simple nature. A sentiment of preference, that soft tender emotion of the mind, which would have moderated and controuled the tumults of the passions, was unknown. Influenced at all times by the spirit which had dictated the laws, those who felt any partial attachments were required to stifle them, unless they meant to oppose themselves to the grand general received maxim, and defeat the important ends of population.

I have before observed, that fruitfulness was at this time the quality

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mostly desired and sought after in women. Barrenness became a reproach, and was esteemed a certain mark of the displeasure of God. Those who were subjected to this misfortune submitted themselves to every degradation, without daring to murmur.

The patriarchs, however, placed in a manner between a state of barbarism and civilization, not only treated the women, from the need which they had of them, with mildness, but also demeaned themselves in their presence with considerable modesty, and confined themselves to the use of chaste and decorous language.

It is to be remarked, that this deference and esteem for the female character is, among any people, the consequence and the sure proof of their having advanced some degrees towards civilization. Among barbarous nations women are of no account; when the manners of men become more refined they are regarded as worthy of some

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notice, and finally, when they become corrupt and dissipated, they have every homage paid to them.

Their condition is a certain guide for the observations of a stranger who enters an unknown country. On the contrary hypothesis one might say, with leave to pass over the revolution, that our long want of gallantry and politeness to the fair sex seems to threaten us with a return of the ages of barbarism.

If the patriarchs strove but little to render themselves agreeable to their wives, they troubled themselves still less with their amusements. The occupations of women consisted, among them, in seasoning the meat, in making bread, and in preparing materials for their tents: and their recreations were confined to the inhaling of the refreshing breezes of the evening under the shade of a vine, or a fig tree, and in singing songs in honour of the divine Being.

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Sometimes, at their festivals, the dance was allowed them, particularly at that of sheep-shearing, which they celebrated with considerable solemnity. Men and women collected together at this time, and joined in the amusements: but these diversions were very rare; and as the manners of the women were chaste, they certainly did not derive from them any respect, the only recompence worthy of good conduct. Every thing conspires to shew us the little esteem in which they were held: the power, for instance, with which the men were invested of putting away their wives without assigning any reason; and, also, the law which declared a woman, who had been delivered of a female child, to be for sixty-six days impure; while only one half of that time was required after the birth of a male. Indeed every stage of their history recalls to them the unhappiness of their lot. But, in spite of this state of insignificance, some of

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them, by the energy of their character, have attained to considerable consideration, and even to situations of authority.

This sex, possessed at all times of much art, and adapted for yielding to every circumstance in order to gratify their natural desire of domination, knew how to profit by the idea, then universally prevalent, that women were a proper medium of communication with the Deity. The Israelites, naturally religious, were not allured from their worship by any of those pleasures unknown in the simple state of their manners, loved, in the moments of repose, to elevate their minds to heaven. Sacred songs kindled in them a species of enthusiasm and holy delirium; particularly when they were sung by their wives. At such times they easily mistook the disorders of their passions for the effects of some divine power in the women; who, too artful not to cherish such an error, dared to mingle prophecies with their prayers. Fondly attached

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to this sweet delusion, the men gave themselves up to its raptures. Several women were made prophetesses; and it was thus that Deborah was elevated to the dignity of a judge of Israel*.

In looking back to the first ages of the world, it appears to have been the custom to marry without allowing time for any previous agreement with the woman. It was but a little before the time of Abraham that this practice was altered; and men afterwards purchased their wives. Men appear to have had at first such gross ideas respecting the union of the sexes, as to have considered their companions in no more respectable a light than the animals they conducted; and even, when grown

* Deborah, the wife of Lapidoth, under the direction of God, commanded Barak, the son of Abinoam, to march against Sisera, "the captain of Jabin's army." Barak having refused, unless the prophetess followed him, she agreed to go, marched, defeated the enemy, and celebrated her victory in a sublime song.

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more polished, they regarded these their second halves only as their slaves. A long time subsequent to the age of the patriarchs, the Jews continued to retain, from their ancestors, the same anxiety respecting the increase of population; and in compliance with the command, "increase and multiply," they made marriage an indispensable duty, attributing the bad conduct of the younger females to their celibacy. In the Talmud we find the following question:—"Who is the father that prostitutes his daughter, if it be not he who is either too reluctant in marrying her, or unites her to an old man?" I have in this chapter given no more than a very imperfect sketch of the simple manners of the patriarchs. Perhaps the marriages of Jacob will afford my readers a more complete idea of the customs of these ancient shepherds.

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THE MARRIAGES OF JACOB.

JACOB was seated by the well when the daughter of Laban, the tender Rachel, first presented herself to his sight. Seven years passed away; one day more, and she was to be his wife. His herds wander to and fro along the sides of the mountains shaded by the dusky pine, through meadows decorated by the flowers of spring, or on the precipitous banks of the torrent. He thinks not of his cattle; he contemplates the towers of Laban, and the path his beloved is to tread. As soon as the heifers should low, and seek their resting-place, she was coming to ease them of their burthen of milk; which was destined for the festivities of the ensuing day. In order to calm his tender anxieties, he sung the following

SONG.

LIKE almond-trees, in blossom gay,
She blooms at earliest peep of day;
Soft as her flocks that crop the dew,
And even than her flocks more true.

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Antelopes are not more light,
Flowing milk is not more white;
Of our meads the fairest flower—
Thus she blesses every hour.

Blossoms of the fragrant rose
Lose their sweetness where she goes:
To our heaven-favoured fields
Still a higher charm she yields.
Her accents, though she disappear,
Linger on my ravish'd ear;
Though my eyes know not her pace,
My throbbing heart her steps can trace.

More serene than cloudless skies
Beams the lustre of her eyes;
Flow'rs at dawn that scent the heath
Yield to Rachel's balmy breath.
Sweeter than the plaintive dove
Fall the accents of my love;
And all its truth, and all its fear,
Dwell in Rachel's breast sincere.

As the shepherd was sighing with impatience, he heard some footsteps approaching him. He turned, and beheld a man bathed in sweat, with his feet covered with dust. He thought he recollected—he recognized the fea-

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tures of the traveller. "What! is it thou, the son of Eliezer, thou who watchedst over me in my infancy? Does heaven preserve to me Isaac and my good mother?" "They live full of days, and with no other care than that of knowing if thou art alive, and what is thy condition. They have sent me to thee as Abraham, at another time, sent my father." "Did they then hear nothing of me from the Babylonian merchants who passed this way the year of that great tempest?" "They heard those men speak of thee, and a thousand times blessed the name of the Lord." "Sit thou down by this well," returned Jacob; and then called a shepherd, who stood at a distance, with an arrow, and desired him to wash the stranger's feet. "Let it be as thou hast said;—but, O my son, relate to me what has befallen thee since we last parted. The merchants told us that they had seen thee full of strength and beauty; but they were able to inform us of nothing

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more. The gold which they went to seek fully occupied their minds." Jacob, fixing his eyes on the water which was running from the well, replied—"I will satisfy thee, then, without reluctance. I look back upon my passed life as upon a cloudless sky, illumined by a resplendent sun.

"Thou hast not forgotten the hour when I quitted our home by the advice of my mother, who dreaded, on my account, the resentment of my brother Esau*. During twenty days I journied towards the east, and on the evening of the twenty-first I rested by this well. Two numerous herds were lodged in the adjoining parts, and the sheep seemed wasted by thirst; for the well was then, as it is now, secured by a large stone. I asked the shepherds, 'Whence, my brethren, do you come?' 'From Charræ,' they replied. I enquired again—'If they knew Laban the son of

* Or Edom.

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Nabor.' 'Yes, we do.' 'Does the Lord continue to him his health?' 'As well as to thyself, young stranger. But behold his daughter Rachel comes this way with her flocks; she will tell thee more of him than we are able.' As they spoke, I removed the stone; for it is the custom here not to open the well before the herds are collected together. Whilst Rachel advanced towards the shade of this pine, I admired her simple deportment, widely different from the bold demeanour of those daughters of Heth for whom my mother entertains so great a dislike. But when she came near to me, and I was able to distinguish her features, and the splendour of her beauty, I felt a trouble mingled with delight. My heart expanded, and I could not raise my eyes. A gentle warmth crept through my veins, and my whole body trembled. My lips sought in vain for words; my mother and her slaves were the only females with whom I had ever con-

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versed. I stood like a man blind from his birth, whose eyes the hand of the Lord had suddenly opened. Whilst she viewed me with surprise, I watered her herds, and drove away the camels of others to make room for hers. 'Stranger,' said she, 'I thank thee; the Lord be with thee.' 'I am no stranger,' I answered, raising my voice with apprehension; 'thou art my brother's* daughter. I am Jacob, the son of Isaac; and, like my father, am come to seek a wife out of thy family.' In speaking these words I embraced her knees. 'I am glad,' replied she, 'that thou art related to my family:' and without waiting longer she ran to inform her father. She soon returned with him: they were both out of breath. The son of Nabor embraced me, swore he thought he saw his sister, and called me by the most endearing names: then

* Among the Hebrews, it was customary to call the uncle, brother.

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placing his arm round my body, he conducted me to his house.

" Laban is the father of two daughters; but I saw only Rachel. They have put to me questions without number: they wished to know if my mother speak often of her country and her family? if my father have shared his bed with other women? what number of cattle and of slaves he possesses? and if the pasturage be as rich as that of Mesopotamia? But when they came to speak of my brother, my heart was locked, and I could make them no reply. I reflected, and at what moment have I not thought of it? that I had incurred his hatred, and that it was at this price I had obtained the blessing of my father."—

Here Jacob paused for some minutes; and his eyes let fall some tears.

" I resolved," continued he, " by my services, to deserve the esteem of Laban; I asked him to let me watch his herds; I hoped to have watched

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them with Rachel, or at least to assist her in her toils: for she being the youngest was always sent to the fields. The Lord regarded my brother's house; in a short time his herds became fatter and more numerous. Instead of bringing them back every evening, as Rachel had been obliged to do, I ascended the wild mountains, little frequented by other shepherds, and there remained many days, under no other roof than the sky, with no other companions than my cattle, the echo of the neighbouring rocks, and my love, which sustained my strength, and held the place of every thing. The days I came to reside in the house were festival days. I brought back with me every time, for the two sisters, baskets woven with bull-rushes, and filled with flowers and fruits, found only on the mountain: I brought them also the nest of young birds ready to fly. Sometimes it was a young fawn, or some precious stones, with pieces of crystal. But I composed songs for Rachel only.

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" One day I observed that Leah wept in attending to them, and I sung no more in her presence. As soon as she could distinguish the lowing of the herd, or hear the little bell which hung to the neck of the rams, Rachel would hasten to meet me; and every time she would embrace me, and say, 'O my brother, you have tarried very long.'

" One day, as the summer advanced, Laban said to me, 'Thou art my flesh and blood, must it be that thou serve me for nought?' I replied, 'Well, I will serve thee, then, seven years for Rachel thy second daughter. Rachel is lovelier than the almond-flower, and sweeter than the milk of thy heifers; when she comes to the herd, she is more nimble than the antelope. Yes, I will serve thee seven years to obtain her.' 'I would rather,' replied he, 'give her to thee than to another. Continue then among us.' Rachel and I planted by this well the almond-tree which thou seest; and we said at the

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time, "When this tree shall blossom for the sixth time, the seven years will have passed." Seven years are a tedious season; but we shall see one another every day; and here, under this dear almond-tree, we will sing this song together.

THE ALMOND-TREE.

THOU, that ere thy fruit appear,
Seven new births must undergo;
Cherish'd tree! how many a fear
Our bosoms for thy sake shall know!
For thee our hearts shall feel a care
When lightest clouds o'ershade the sky;
And ev'n in days serene and fair
Shall dread the raging tempest nigh.

Should the bleak and low'ring night
Cold and flaky show'rs forebode,
Thee I'll seek at dawning light
To ease thee of thy chilly load.
Should the distant thunders groan,
The light'ning threat thee with its rage,
Of Rachel's pray'r the tender tone
For thee the tempest shall assuage.

Lovely tree! thy foliage gay
With my passion seems to grow,
Boding many a happy day,
Void of sorrow, free of woe!

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Make it, gentle spring, thy care;
Zephyr with your gentle kiss
Make it doubly sweet and fair
'Gainst the day that brings me bliss.

The nights beginning to wax cold, Laban consented that I should return every evening to the house. We surrounded the young almond-tree with a quick fence; our hands watered it when the earth was parched, and placed around it upon poles woven mats, to protect it from the scorching breezes of the south, and the raging tempests of the north.—"Beloved tree," said we, "hasten to stretch forth thy branches; thy brotherly shade shall conceal our loves."

A voice at this instant interrupted him;—"Son of Isaac, it is not well thus to reveal our secrets."—He turned round and beheld Rachel half hidden by the trunk of a willow-tree. From the entrance of the valley she had seen the stranger; and either from a certain bashfulness at coming thus to seek

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him whom she did not yet call her husband, or by a stratagem equally innocent, she had taken a turn under the trees in her way to the well.

Leah, in the mean time, wandered on the banks of the stream which flowed through the fields in the neighbourhood of the house, and shed there many bitter tears. Every time she perceived the happy Rachel drawing near to Jacob, thither would she repair to conceal her grief, and give it free scope. From the time that the wedding-day was fixed she ceased to eat: and all the hours of the night she would pass without once closing her eyes in sleep, or obtaining a moment's intermission to her pain! Wan and meagre, a burning languor had almost effaced her beauty. She was like the olive which has shed its blossoms, or the young plant which fades and withers when voracious insects gnaw its tender roots. Her father had observed her altered appearance; and

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having one day followed her in secret, and stopped near her, he heard her sing the following verses in a plaintive tone:

SONG.

Gaze not my sheep! ye cause no more my fear,
Unheeded in the tangled forest rove:
My flock no more my guardian voice shall hear,
Save mingled with the sighs and sobs of love.

Thou, my white heifer, favoured now so long,
Of whom, well pleas'd I pressed the milky store,
Go, careless wander the wild woods among,
For Leah's fancy thou canst charm no more.

Thou knowst not, Jacob, how consumes my heart,
My sister to behold thy happy wife!
This night to her shall every bliss impart,
This night shall end the wretched Leah's life!

After she had finished singing, she thus continued her complaint.—

"Why has light been given to the unfortunate, and life to those whose hearts are overwhelmed with grief? who pant for death without obtaining it; and who, in seeking for it, seem as if they were digging in ground where there might be hidden treasures? The

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evils which I dreaded have befallen me. To thee, O Lord! I turn my face, and on thee I would fix my eyes! Root out of my heart the attachment that consumes me, or remove me from the face of the earth! Shall I be compelled to behold my sister led by my father's hand into Jacob's chamber! And yet it is to-morrow!"—She could say no more. Laban drew near to her; she heard him approach; she shrieked, arose, and ran to hide her face, bathed in tears, in the bosom of her father. "My dear child," said the son of Nabor, "thou whom I first received into my arms, why didst thou not speak? why not appeal to thy father's heart?" "Alas! what could I do against my sister? Rachel is beloved of Jacob; but I do not hate her." Laban, pressing her to his breast, exclaimed; "No, I will not suffer my flesh to die:—what more powerful command can I have than the calls of my own bowels?"—Then, without

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saying more, he led her to the house. A ray of hope shone in the countenance of his daughter; and appeared like the pale and beamless glimmering of the sun on the noon of a cloudy day.

The arrival of Damas, the son of Eliezer, seemed to occasion Laban some embarrassment. The repast of the evening was sad, and the guests spoke but little. But Jacob and Rachel perceived neither the heaviness of Laban, the thoughtful aspect of Damas, nor the jealousy of Leah. Seated near to each other they understood one another by one word and one look; and this word and this look conveyed to their minds the joyful assurance of mutual affection. They were full of their happiness, and blushed at their anxiety. But every tender glance, shot from their eyes, was a poisoned arrow that rent the heart of Leah. She would have fled; but, unable to escape, remained fixed to her seat like a dying man to his couch. Laban kept his

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eyes fixed upon her, and sighed from his heart.

On the morrow, which was the last day of the seventh year, the neighbouring kings and princes, attended by their retinues, and mounted upon camels covered with splendid trappings, arrived at Laban's house. His servants had killed for their entertainment twenty calves, fed with milk, an ox, laden with fat, twenty lambs, and as many kids.

Rachel and her sister were occupied during the morning in preparing the different provisions, and in setting the fruits in order in the baskets. The meadow was covered with fires, whereon they baked bread made of barley meal, dryed in the sun. Neither mead, nor the most delicious wines of Apamia and Sobal Syria, were lacking at the feast. All the guests were crowned with flowers; and at night the young men danced to the sound of the flute and the tabor.

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The son of Bathuel * beheld all these proceedings in his house, and remained pensive and sad. When the guests had all retired to the tents erected for them in the fields, for the house was not large enough to contain so numerous a company, he repaired, as was customary, to the apartment of his daughters. Leah had already untied the fillets by which her long hair had been bound up. Rachel had preserved her dress entire; she had perfumed her head with nard and with cinnamon; and her hands were scented with myrrh. She was seated near their sisterly couch, with her head declined, and her eyes immoveably fixed; but her breast was sensibly agitated; love, bashfulness, and a tender, yet oppressive misgiving, made her heave many a deep and lengthened sigh. "Leah, my elder daughter," said Laban, "follow me into thy husband's chamber."—

* Laban.

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"Can it be? What did you say?"—The two sisters stood fixed with astonishment. "But, my father," said Rachel, as soon as she could collect strength to calm her perturbation, "it is I that you have promised to Jacob."—"True," replied Laban, "I have done so; but I have not done well. Knowest thou not that it is the custom and the law of the country that the eldest daughter should be married first? Shall the caprice of a young man oblige me to violate them? Who would take Leah for his wife after such an offence? With respect to thee, Rachel, as thou art not less dear to me, I will shortly marry thee to some powerful prince." "Oh! my father," she exclaimed, hiding her face with her hands, "have you then deceived me!" "Rachel, my daughter," rejoined Laban, "never, until this moment hast thou offended me; but if thou go hence before the hour of the first meal, my curse shall fall on thy head." With these words he seized the

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hand of his elder daughter, dragged her forth, and conducted her to Jacob's chamber.

Jacob, either because, in tenderness to the bashfulness of the young bride, such was the custom of the times, or else because Laban had so ordered it, had with him no light. The father of Rachel exclaimed in an elevated tone, "Son of Abraham, receive from my hand thy wife; her father resigns to thee all his prerogatives, and charges thee with all his obligations. Thou art the oak of Bassan; she is the amorous vine that rises by thy side, reclines upon thy branches, and mingles her delicious fruits with thy foliage. Love and protect thy companion. And be thou, my daughter, obedient to thy lord. The God of heaven bless and render fruitful your alliance!"—So saying, he delivered the trembling bride into the arms of her abused husband.

Rachel, in the mean time, over-

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whelmed with grief, with jealousy, with indignation, exclaimed :—" O perfidy! O the crime of a sister, of a father, and, perhaps, of a husband! Jacob and my father have violated their faith. He who swore to me a love so true, this day, at this moment!——No, he cannot be false; he is, as well as myself, the victim of the basest treachery. What a recompence for so much love and constancy! After seven years of toil, anxiety, and faithfulness—my hand was his reward! But, while I am speaking, my hateful rival receives those embraces which are my due! O! insupportable thought! When day shall reveal to him thy features and thy perfidy, may he curse thee a thousand times, drive thee from his bed, and make thee atone, by his hatred, for the happiness of which thou hast robbed me! Can he hate thee enough? And will his hatred of thee give me back——?" At these words despair choked her utterance; her afflicted eyes

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perceived no more the feeble glimmering of the lamp: her footsteps wander; she totters, and falls violently on the floors. While Jacob, deceived by the darkness, is filled with ecstasy, alas! his best-beloved, his tender Rachel, agitated by convulsive sighs, struggles like the dove stricken by the well directed pebble from the sling.

About the expiration of the night, sleep closed the eyes of Jacob, and he dreamed. An impressive voice thus addressed him: "O son of Isaac, the happiness by which thou art intoxicated is but a vain delusion. Think not of thy happiness, think not of thy life, so long as thy brother Edom is not pacified. Hast thou not robbed him of the blessing of his father? Dost thou remember it? In like manner, Jacob, shalt thou be deceived. The wickedness of man accomplishes often the ends of my justice."

When Leah had recovered from the confusion into which she had been

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thrown by so much unexpected felicity, her heart was filled with regret and with terror: she rose from her husband's bed, threw herself on the mats, and continued in prayer until the dawn of the morning. "O my God!" said she, "how canst thou pardon so great an offence! How have I been able to commit it! Ah me! I shall always be the object of my husband's detestation." As she sobbed, Jacob came to solace her. "My beloved," said he, "where art thou? Come, my dove, come, dissipate the terrors of a threatening dream! Wilt thou believe it, my sweet Rachel! whilst by thy side, and my heart was yet beating for thee, I dreamed that thou, the comfort, the support, the breath of my existence, wert taken from me! What! dost thou make no answer?" On finishing these words he arose from his bed. The daughter of Laban, still prostrate on the ground, embraced his knees, and bathed them with

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burning tears. The day as yet but feebly dawned, and Leah had not raised her face; but Jacob perceived her black hair hanging in loose disorder;—and Rachel's hair was auburn! He suddenly grasped the arm of the unfortunate, raised her up, and indignantly drew her back. "What," exclaimed he, "do I behold! As thou hast thus chained me to thy destiny, woe be to thee! Thy days shall be full of tears, and they shall be as bitter as my own! Fly from me, leave me; thou hast filled me with horror!" "Crush me with thy anger," said the trembling bride, "I have deserved it. Oh! my lord, one moment has ruined me; thou hast seen it; I perish, but I perish innocently; my father drew me even to thy arms. Great God! thou seest my heart! No, thou hast not granted to the daughters of men the fortitude which at that instant thou deniedst to me! For seven years have I loved thee, Jacob; I was

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silent, and thy affections fixed upon another. I did not imagine that my misery could be so great; I had not felt its stings; I had not experienced thy displeasure! In pity, in justice, strike! Deliver me from the light of day, deliver me from thy presence; strike! I shall never cease to love thee!" Jacob repented of his rigour. "The Lord," said he, in an agitated voice, "has not made me a heart of brass. Arise, I shall go hence; I will return to the land of my fathers. Alas! what anguish shall I leave behind me! and what affliction shall I carry in my bosom!"—He went directly to Damas, and in the breast of this old domestic deposed his sorrows. They immediately walked together to meet Laban, whom they saw coming towards them. "Faithless man!" cried Jacob, "with what face dost thou dare approach me? Thou wert poor when I came to thee; now thou art rich, and thou art so through my care. Thy goats have not been barren; my hands

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have not dressed for myself a single lamb of thy flock. I have never rendered thee any account of what were destroyed by ferocious animals; mine has been the whole of the loss. Unremittingly exposed to the heat of the sun, and the cold of the night, I have watched over thy welfare as if it had been my own. I have laboured during seven years more than all thy servants together. What reward have I required? Thy second daughter without a dower; (I did not want thy riches, for the inheritance of Isaac my father is equal to my desires;) but this recompence was to my eyes of inestimable value; and thou hast robbed me of it! And dost thou think I can suffer the privation?"——"My son," interrupted Laban, "thou art wrong to address me in a tone so rude."—"The injury is in the offence, not in the complaint!"—"Thou interruptest me: it is the custom of our country to marry the elder daughter first. Leah loved thee,

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and I took pity on her. Keep her as thy only wife for seven days more, that she may bear thee children, and be honoured as their mother, and then I will give thee Rachel. It is true, my dear son, that I have deceived thee, but I love both my daughters equally; and I take the lord to witness that if, in the embarrassing situation in which I found myself placed, he had inspired me with better counsel, I should have followed it with hesitation. As the tumult of boiling water is allayed by the admixture of that which is more temperate, so was the anger of Jacob assuaged as Laban proceeded in his justification. He acceded to his proposal; and ran, full of joy, to communicate what had passed to Rachel, whom he found overwhelmed by her distress. As soon as she saw him, she shrieked aloud. Notwithstanding this happy change she preserved an air of sadness. She consented to share with her sister a husband whom she had loved so dearly,

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whom alone she had loved; and who would, perhaps, one day yield her only a half of his heart. Damas, fearing lest some new obstacle should disturb their happiness, tarried until the marriage of Rachel. He soon afterwards departed to convey the intelligence to his aged master Isaac. Jacob treated his first wife with much tenderness; but the whole of his love was concentrated in the second. Leah was only his sister; and this she felt a deep affliction, but she never complained. She indulged her tears only in solitude, as she had done previous to her marriage. She concealed from her husband the overflowings of her tenderness, lest he should deem her troublesome. From her affection for him, she wished to have loved Rachel; but all she was able to do was to live in peace with her.

The Lord, who supports the afflicted as the eagle bears her young upon her wings, regarded the elder daughter of

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Laban with an eye of compassion, and blessed her embraces. Nine months after this happy night, but after many days of grief, she bare two sons; the former of whom she named Reuben, which signifies, "the Lord has seen my affliction," and the other, Simeon, or "God has favoured me." Two years glided away, and Rachel remained barren; at which she was inconsolable, and night and day prayed that God would grant her a son in her turn. She envied her poor sister. One day she said to her husband; "Shall not I also, then, have the comfort of being a mother? to look upon my son, fed with my own milk; to see him stretching out his little arms towards thee on thy return from the field, and hear him call upon thee by the name of father; that tender title, already, alas! given thee by others? Ah! when shall that happy day arrive when I shall feel this pleasure rising in my breast! My best-

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beloved! if the Lord give me not children, I shall die!"

Another time, seated at her door to inhale the breezes of the evening, she saw Leah's two little children, on their knees, playing with a mandrake, and disputing which of them should have its lovely flower. She immediately recollected what she had heard concerning the virtue of this plant, and without giving it much credit, went to her sister, and ventured to ask her opinion of it. "My sister," said she, "I will henceforth always carry this flower in my bosom, and, perhaps, I shall at length become like thyself a mother*." Leah, without hesitation, gave her all the mandrakes: "Take them," said she, "and let nothing be wanting to make thee happy."

Rachel, encouraged by her affability, first caressed the little Simeon, and then

* Such a property was attributed to the mandrake by the ancients.

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placed him on her knees. Leah looked on in silence. The child raised his little hands towards Rachel's face, and essayed to return her caresses. At this moment she lost the command of her feelings: she threw herself at her sister's feet, and lifting her voice in tears, said to her; "O! my sister, I have a favour to beg of thee!"—"Alas! what canst thou have to ask of me?"—"Shall I dare to mention it—I who have occasioned thee so much sadness!"—"Speak, what dost thou require?"—"That thou give me Simeon. Thou shalt still be his mother, and he shall always be under thine eye; but I will take care of his childhood; I will call him my son, and this endearing name shall sooth my grief. Oh! do not refuse me!" Leah returned no answer. Suddenly, her cheeks, which had for so long a time been destitute of colour, became like the two halves of a pomegranate, which the sun has not yet brought to maturity. "I will confide

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to thee my child," said she to her sister, "*if* thou promise to grant what I shall ask of thee."—"I do promise," said Rachel, "and swear that I will. Speak on my sister." After a moment's silence Leah proceeded, "Alas! Jacob's love has made between us a very wide distinction; consent," said she, her eyes gradually declining, "to sleep alone this night. One night will soon expire." Rachel stood astonished, and for a moment hesitated. "Well," said she, at length, "I agree to it;" and then carried with her to her apartment the cradle of the little Simeon. Leah immediately called her servant; "Zelpha," said she, "I shall this night receive my lord. Hasten to bind up my hair with fillets of purple, and fasten to them a crescent of gold. Bring me a robe of the finest linen, and the beautiful sandals which were bequeathed to me by my mother. These things have long remained untouched in my coffer. Prepare quickly some myrrh,

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nard, and cinnamon." In a moment afterwards Leah went out to meet her husband, arrayed in all her charms, and in a manner reanimated by hope. She seemed almost as lovely as she appeared before her beauties had been withered by sorrow. Rachel heaved a sigh as she passed her.

When she drew near to Jacob, he stood surprised to see her, and to see her dressed as for a day of rejoicing. "My lord," said she, in a soft tone of voice, "thou wilt come to me to-night; I have obtained this favour from my sister, in return for giving up to her our son Simeon to bear in her arms, and rear as her own child. Thou knowest, however, that I love him better than my own life. It was thou who gavedst him to me, and he resembles thee; I have now no other happiness than that of being the mother of thy children!" As she concluded these words she blushed, and her eyes let fall some tears. It was her present happi-

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ness, rather than her passed melancholy, that diffused colour on her cheeks. Touched by her humble patience, the Most High moved towards her the compassion of her husband. "I have never," rejoined she, "wearied thee with my complaints; then recompence me now; cast, for the first time, one kind look on thy servant." "It was not necessary to resign thy child;" said her youthful husband to her, as he clasped her in his arms; "thou, Leah, art also dear to me!" They returned together; and Leah collected all the flowers of the meadows to adorn her bed on this happy occasion.

Nine months afterwards she brought forth a third son, whom she named Levi. The jealousy of Rachel now doubly increased. The young Simeon went daily to his mother, who had nourished him with the milk of her breast; and he proved but a feeble consolation to her who reared him. She complained to the Lord, she complained to her hus-

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band; she bewailed without intermission; and Jacob was distressed. Oftentimes, in the dead silence of the night, he thought he heard the reproaches of his brother; and the menacing tones of Esau seemed long to dwell upon his ears. Nevertheless Jacob was not hardened. His heart was upright; but when the sons of men commit a fault, they are carried away by a torrent; whereas, in order to repair it, they must reascend the rapid current. One night as he lay on his bed, his spirits more than usually depressed, he heard these words:—"I allow no man to be happy so long as a cry, even one single cry, ascends against him. I have before declared it to thee, O son of Abraham!—and dost thou hope to prevail against me, who am the mighty God, the God strong and terrible, the appaler of Isaac! Dost thou forget that my word formed the light? The sin which is not followed by contrition and repentance is written with an iron pen, and with the point of

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a diamond." Ah! what was the happiness of the offspring of Adam when a voice from heaven thus condescended to direct them!

'Jacob submitted himself, without delay, to the word of the Lord. Although Laban ought to have expected that Jacob would one day return to the country of his fathers, he used all his endeavours to induce him to stay. Intreaties, presents, tears, were all, however, ineffectual; they could not alter his resolution. During two days Laban continued to follow him; he could not bear to part with his daughters. On the morning of the third, pierced with regret, he embraced them round: the son of Bathuel viewed them alternately, and said;—"After the Lord has blessed me with this family, so dear to my love, must it be that I return to my house alone! My white hairs, alas! will not be respected! My servants will remain only to close my eyes, and lay me in the dust;—and no one will weep over

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my grave!"—They then cried with one voice;—"We will return, O our father; and the Lord shall preserve thee!" As the herds moved on before, Laban blessed his two daughters and his son-in-law. He blessed also their little sons, and grasped their feeble arms; then, turning, he retrod, with lingering footsteps, the road to Charræ. As soon as Jacob had passed the river Jordan, he sent messengers before him to his brother Esau, in the land of Seir. He said to them;—"After this manner shall you speak to my lord. 'Thy brother Jacob sends thee these words,—I was sent to Laban, and I have served him; now I have slaves and herds, and I send to my lord that I may find favour in his sight'." The servants delivered their message, and soon returned. "We have seen," said they, "thy brother; behold, he comes to meet thee, attended by four hundred men."—Then Jacob took from his herds two hundred she-goats and twenty he-goats, two hundred

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ewes and twenty rams; thirty she camels with their colts, forty heifers, and twenty bulls. He sent these herds on separately, each one conducted by a slave;—to whom he said;—"If thou meet my brother, and he demand of thee whither thou art going, and to whom these cattle belong;—thou shalt answer:—'These are presents which Jacob sends to his lord Esau to assuage his resentment, and he himself is coming after us'." When he had passed the stream of Jabor, he halted, and pitched his tents.

On the morrow, he resumed his march with the rising of the sun: and when he lifted up his eyes he beheld his brother Esau advancing at the head of his band. Their appearance inspired him with terror; for the Lord had said to him;—*All his soldiers shall be valiant, his quiver shall be like an open sepulchre.*'

Jacob left his wives and his children behind him, and proceeded alone, and bowed himself seven times towards the earth. Esau ran to him, raised him up,

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embraced him, and wept. On beholding his wives and his children, he asked him—"Who are those? Do they belong to thee?" Jacob replied—"Yes, my lord, they are the children which God has given me." Leah then drew near to him with her sons, and having bowed before him, Rachel advanced and bowed also. "What," demanded Esau, "were those herds which I met in my way?"—"I sent them in order to find favour in the presence of my lord."—"I am rich enough, my brother; keep for thy own use the things which belong to thee."—"Let it not be so done, I pray thee; but, if thou forget my offence, receive from me this humble present. Since I saw thee last, I think I have beheld the face of the Lord; look upon me, then, with an eye of kindness, and do not refuse those presents which I have received from God, the disposer of all things." Overcome by the intreaties of his brother, Esau refused no longer. "Let us pro-

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ceed together," said he; "I will be the companion of thy way."—"Thou knowest that I have with me tender infants, and ewes with charged udders. Let my lord proceed first; I will follow after as quickly as my little children may allow me, and join him in a short time in Seir."—Thus it was determined.

When Jacob was come near to the valley of Mamre, he sent the youngest of his slaves to apprize the aged Isaac of his return. Soon as he beheld Arbe, the dwelling of his grandfather Abraham, Arbe the spot so dear to his childhood! his eyes were filled with tears. As he advanced, a cloud of dust arose at the end of the road. A numerous company of servants, of women, and of children, were running to see him. Full of joy, he alighted from his camel, and, as if he had been related to him, embraced the first of them that arrived. —"And my mother?" exclaimed he; "and Isaac my father?"—"They live,"

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replied the servants, "they live! and, behold, thy mother cometh this way!"

Rebecca, leaning on the daughter of his nurse, advanced with hastened footsteps. Her son forgot to bow before her*, and ran into her arms. She breathed with difficulty, and continued some time without speaking:—"My son! my best beloved!" said she, at length: "God of Abraham! have I then lived to embrace my dear son!"

Isaac, who had for a long time been confined to his bed, commanded his servants to convey him before the entrance of his tent.—When he heard the footsteps of those who approached him (for he was blind), he seemed to forget his age, and arose to walk; Jacob ran towards him, and supported him in his arms. He replaced him in his chair, and bowed himself before him: "O! my father!" said he, "there has not

* The uniform practice of the orientals.

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passed a day whereon I have not besought the Lord to prolong thine years. He has granted my request; and I once more embrace thy knees, and behold thy face! The Lord be blessed in thee, O thou most righteous among men!" Isaac was moved, and could answer only by his sighs:—and he died in the midst of his transports!—The venerable father was buried with all the respect due to his character as the minister of God on the earth.

Some time after Jacob's arrival, the Lord regarded Rachel. She announced that she was pregnant; and this was to the whole of the family a new obligation to bless the Lord. Shortly she brought into the world that Joseph, whose history is so celebrated. The elder daughter of Laban overcame, by her tenderness and love, the indifference of her husband; and her happiness, so long panted after, became as animating as her sufferings had been afflictive.

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Despise not, ye wives, who are unhappy in your marriages, the example which this ancient and simple history sets before you. Patience, in submitting to your troubles, is a path which may conduct you to felicity.

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS AND CHINESE.

The Egyptians and the Chinese were the most early civilized people of the world; I shall therefore consider in one view the condition of women among these two nations.

If we credit some writers, the ancient Egyptians, in spite of the jealousy which, in proportion to the heat of the climate, and the degrees of violence which it imparts to the passions, has always been more or less powerful among mankind, allowed the women

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an uncontrouled freedom: but this opposition between the manners and the climate has never obtained among the Chinese.

The history of ancient Egypt is to us almost unknown; it is only from some Greek writers, who by no means agree in their accounts, that we are able to obtain the little inadequate and probably erroneous information which we have. Herodotus assures us that the Egyptians married only one wife; Diodorus of Sicily, on the contrary, asserts that they married several. M. de Paw imagines that Herodotus was deceived, either by the example of the priests, who, from being occupied by their functions, were obliged to confine themselves to one wife, or else by that of the common people, to whom many things were denied by poverty, which would have been allowed them by the laws. All accounts tend to convince us that the domestic servitude of the women was as ancient as the monarchy.

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Some authors speak of the respect in which the Egyptians held their women; "and who came," say they, "to worship them instead of Isis, or the moon." How comes it to pass, then, that, with the exception of three or four queens, the names of none of them have been handed down to us? According to the most ancient institutions of Egypt women were declared incapable of reigning. This law of prohibition was derived from that which excluded them from all sacerdotal functions. As no one could ascend the throne without having been consecrated and adopted by the college of priests, they were, in fact, completely debarred its honours. It is sufficiently evident that the women possessed no sacerdotal dignity; although, for the better discharge of their duties, they might have been instructed in what was called "the Wisdom of the Egyptians." The women were denied this austere study; but the priests above all things refused to ini-

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tiate them in those mysteries, which derived all their power from superstition and secrecy. Some women, as we are informed by M. de Caylus, were mostly occupied in nourishing scarabs, shrew-mice, and other little sacred animals. It is also proved that it was prohibited them to enter the temple of Apis, except on the first days of their installation.

The Egyptians were a gloomy and yet an empassioned people. The women had, in general, great command over their passions, but they had not such a controul over their minds as to be able to tyrannize over a lover. The profound art of the priests was displayed in the Isisean worship; during the celebration of which they made a dull and quiet people pass all at once from the most severe ceremonies to festivals the most licentious and intoxicating. But the women were not less harassed; they were continually watched by an innumerable number of eunuchs.

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The Egyptians, suspicious without love, were also the victims of jealousy. To such an extreme did they suffer it to carry them, that after the death of their wives they even feared the attempts of the embalmers, whom M. de Caylus stiles terrible men *. It is necessary to explain this apparent contradiction. From a knowledge of the frailty of the passions we perceive that the love which is purely physical is often more suspicious than that which is tempered by morality: the constancy of the heart is a security against the weakness of the passions.

In order to preserve among them some women of distinguished blood, it was usual in ancient Egypt to deprive

* Τας δε γυναικας των επιφανεων ανδρων επεαν τελευτησωσι ου παραυτικα διδοσι ταριχευειν, γας δε οσαι αν ωσι ευειδεες καρτα γας δεγε πλευνος γυναικες· αλλ' επεαν τριταιαι η τεταρταιαι γενωνται, ουτω παραδιδοσι τοισι ταριχευουσι. τουτο δε ποιεουσι ουτω τηδε εινεκα, ινα μη σφι οι ταριχευται μισγωνται τησι γυναιξι. λαμφθηναι γας τινα φασι μισγομενον νεκρω προσφατω γυναικος· κατειπαι δε τον ομοτεχνον.

HERODOT. Euterpe.

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them in some measure of the use of their feet, by a painful process *. And as they had decreed it to be indecent in them to go abroad without shoes, they deprived them of the means of wearing any.

A law threatened with death any one who should make shoes for a woman. It was certainly artful to enforce a custom by a penalty. We might, perhaps, doubt the existence of this law, if Plutarch did not agree respecting it with Kitab-al-Machard.

There existed, indeed, one class of women, free enough, for the purposes of running with speed in the city, and of placing themselves in indecent postures before the ox Apis. But we must not confound these with the other females; for this would be like estimating the manners, and, more or less, the liberty of the Japanese and Chi-

* This custom, either through jealousy, or in order to render the feet of the women very small, still prevails in China.

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nese by their bonzes and public prostitutes.

A Greek author thus expresses himself: "If the women had not been held captive in ancient Egypt, and if they had participated in the government, they would not have allowed of that mutilated people, the eunuchs, who rose at length to seize upon the supreme authority."

Let us endeavour to reconcile, if possible, the perpetual contradictions of ancient writers concerning the true condition of women in ancient Egypt. I imagine we may be able to arrive a the truth by comparing the different æras which they described with those in which they write.

At first the condition of women was much alike both among the Egyptians and the neighbouring nations; but their slavery was sooner meliorated in Egypt.

An English author thus accounts for this difference. Whilst other nations lived in forests, or in tents, and sup-

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ported themselves by fishing, and by the chace, the Egyptians, tempted to devote themselves to agriculture by the attractions of the precious manure which the Nile, in its overflowings, deposited on their lands, and forced at such times to dwell in elevated houses to secure themselves against the swelling of the waters, soon formed a social body, of which the women constituted the bond and the delight.

Confined together for so long a time they endeavoured to render themselves agreeable; and civilization was established sooner under this order of things, than among nations of fishermen and hunters. The women were not backward in availing themselves of these occasions to display all the resources from which they derived their accomplishments and their charms, and to secure to themselves a dominion which they had not till that time possessed. Every thing tends to shew us that this people, naturally well in-

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formed, gave to their women a very careful education. They forbad them music, as an art calculated to enervate the mind. Some have thought that they denied them this recreation only for the purpose of confining them altogether to serious occupations: I think, however, that there was more of jealousy in the precaution; and that depriving the women of this mean of pleasing, added to their own tranquillity. However this be, many of them arrived to power; and many were entrusted with embassies to the neighbouring nations. They addicted themselves also to commercial transactions; which proves to us that mankind, at this time, respected the penetration of their minds. They were versed moreover, in the science of numbers; and, by the peculiar docility of their faculties, could turn themselves with as much facility to abstract employments, as to the means of seduction.

From all these observations we may

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then conclude, that among the ancient Egyptians the women lived in a state of servitude, generally disguised, but more mild than among other nations;—and that those of them who arose to superior places and employments, in a manner, obtained them by conquest through their accomplishments and their talents.

Having advanced one degree farther in civilization, and their manners having become proportionally softened, women held in the estimation of the Egyptians a rank unknown among the neighbouring people. The following anecdote may, perhaps, be quoted in support of this truth.

Psammetichus having been conquered, and Memphis having fallen into the hands of his enemies, they ordered him to be placed in an elevated situation whence he could see his daughter forced to fetch water from the river; this spectacle was to him more dreadful than the loss of his crown,

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and his liberty; and his enemies thought to subject him by it to more exquisite torment. But of all the circumstances, which might be quoted to show the respect entertained by the Egyptians for the female character, there is not one that will go farther to prove it, than that honourable law which especially charged this sex to overlook the maintenance of the aged, and to administer comfort to the indigent and the infirm. Nothing appears to me more affecting! Let us hope, for the credit of an honoured sex, that this law be not an error of history! What could we do better than to establish it among us! The grey-sisters have realised this scene*. To do the women justice, they are, and ever will be, the genuine consolation of the human race. They have more need than we have to comfort the beings whom they see in distress. If we except the evils

* Chaptal has re-established them.

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they occasion, and respecting which they evince an insensibility that arises from an incapacity to alleviate them*, they seem to think that all who surround them call upon them for consolation; and to consider it their duty to fly to their relief. Thus they inspire a secret confidence in the breasts of the unfortunate. If a man pass in company with a woman before some afflicted beings, it is to the woman that, by a kind of instinct, the first complaint and supplication will be addressed.

* Nothing is more easily accounted for than the insensibility of women to the evils which they have occasioned. In all other evils, when their assistance is solicited, their pity grants it, because it depends upon themselves. But in those evils which they occasion, we demand of them their love, which does not depend upon themselves; we require them to resign their persons; that is to say, "Be ye wretched that we may be happy." This egotism of love renders them insensible to its complaints. In other respects, in this case as in a thousand others, the two sexes are alike; no man, I imagine, loves out of politeness.

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They anticipate with greater certainty a consolatory answer, and immediate relief. Grace and feebleness seem to declare that they are the attendants of pity. If in physical sufferings women are invaluble;—in moral maladies we can only hope from them a salutary alleviation. A friend will sooth you, or sustain your courage; he will impart to you for the time too much strength. He understands not how to proportion it to the lassitude which always succeeds to distress.

This relief is sudden, without preparation and without degrees. It is a day too bright for those weak eyes, which should slowly re-enter the light. M. Thomas has said; "Women know how to handle a disordered heart with more delicate instruments than are known to us."

It has been already proved, respecting the ancient Egyptians, by the law which I lately mentioned, that even in remote ages, if their despotic jea-

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lousy contrived to enslave the women, they, nevertheless, knew how to estimate and appreciate their worth.

As to the contemporary nations, we must observe, that historians have left but very few things upon record concerning them on the subject of which we treat; and that they have been able to form only conjectures respecting the private lives of the Babylonians, the Assyrians, the Medes, and the Persians. It is, moreover, to be remarked, that among all the nations, bordering on those of which I have been speaking, the conditions of the women were very nearly alike; and that, if we admit the opinions of the most esteemed writers, the Egyptians were the only people who had emancipated them.

If the condition of women underwent changes in Egypt, it appears that among the Chinese it has remained the same from the remotest antiquity; and has altered but little even in our days. The wide difference to be observed in

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the education given by these two nations to their females, indicates the opposite views with which they contemplated this subject.

The Egyptians used great care in forming the minds of their daughters; the Chinese, on the contrary, have always left them in a state of ignorance, well adapted for that obscurity to which their excessive jealousy would consign them. The idolators of beauty, the Chinese are for ever at the feet of the beings whom they persecute.

When one of their wives is indisposed, they fasten a silken thread round her wrist, the end of which is given to the physician; and it is only by the motion which the pulsations communicate to it that he is allowed to judge of the state of his patient. This precaution of jealousy is almost unique in its kind. The word *Asiatic* conveys to them the idea of a slavery, more or less rigid, for women. I shall not multiply examples of Chinese ty-

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ranny on this point; I rather prefer placing them in the notes which are at the end of the work. In them may be seen all the different shades which the jealous whims of this people established in their institutions. Respecting the manners of the Chinese, "Lord Macartney's Embassy," and "The History of Women," both English works, have furnished me with very valuable documents; which I have likewise placed at the end of the work, that they might not impede me in the rapid march which I think I ought to make. Having less materials for delineating Egypt, I will subjoin to this chapter a story, which may convey back the minds of my readers, by a less barren path, towards an æra equally remote. On the arrival of an officer from the army of the East, he related to me the following story. He stated, that it had been translated under his eye from an old Arabic manuscript,

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found in the ruins of a mosque at Cairo.

I have suppressed every detail which would have weakened the interest. This simple tale, in describing the courage, and the misfortunes of Mycerine, displays to us all the energy of which a woman was capable, even at a time, and in a country, in which superstition predominated.

AMENOPHIS AND MYCERINE.

AN EGYPTIAN TALE.

"THERE exists not any thing more barbarous than a race of men swayed by superstition.

"It is known that the Egyptians adopted animals for their deities, and that they worshipped them with idolatrous reverence. Each cast or tribe had its peculiar god: one adopted the

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ox, another scarabs, and even shrew-mice, &c. The hatred which divided these different sects partook of the absurdity which gave it rise. Under some pretexts the worshippers of the ox would not even associate, much less intermarry, with the worshippers of scarabs. To the misfortune of the youthful Amenophis and the beautiful Mycerine, their parents were of different persuasions. Such were the insurmountable obstacles that opposed their union, and the reader may smile at them; but in the eyes of a reflecting man they are not, perhaps, more absurd than those to which many in our own times sacrifice the happiness of their children. In impartially examining mankind in every country, and in every age, we shall find that they hardly ever differ in any thing but in the kind of their folly.

"In ancient Egypt, while the women were yet too young to be tormented by their husbands, their lives were embit-

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tered by their parents; who made them serve a cruel apprenticeship to those evils for which they were destined. The vile practice, of which I have spoken above, and which subjected the girls, in their childhood, to a painful operation that almost deprived them of the use of their feet, rendered it yet more difficult for the women to evade the vigilance of their guardians. It was only with the profoundest secrecy that Amenophis and Mycerine beheld and loved one another. Mycerine, abandoning at length all hopes of being united to her lover, determined she would not give her hand to another, and solemnly consecrated herself to the care of the interior of a temple; an occupation highly respected, and which, in some measure, rendered her person sacred, and more independent of the authority of her parents. This sacrifice effectually preserved her against being given up to any other than the object of her love; but raised,

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at the same time, between herself and him a barrier never to be surmounted. Amenophis, wretched, and despairing of the future, was yet ignorant of the torments which the fidelity of his mistress had prepared for him. The season of the festival of Isis was at hand. It is known that at these licentious festivals the Egyptian priests raised, by their address, the passions of the two sexes to the highest excesses of which they are capable. Amenophis, too delicate to owe to those moments of intoxication a happiness which he only valued when obtained by love, hoped that those days of liberty would bring him near to his Mycerine.—All restraints were then banished, and all their powers were unfelt. The politic priesthood diverted, by this means, the attention of the people, and restrained them from directing it to the source of the usurped authority which they exercised. There was only one class which did not participate in the plea-

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sures of this unbounded freedom; and that consisted of the women to whom was committed the care of the sacred animals. Thus the thoughts of the two lovers were at the same moment directed to these festivals; the one anticipated them with hope, the other with apprehension. These unfortunate beings felt the full weight of their afflictions. Buris, a priest of the goddess Isis, came to aggravate them. It was established as a point in their worship that the young women, consecrated to rear the sacred animals, should submit to that deity only to whom they had devoted themselves. It was sufficiently understood that they were subjected altogether to the priests. Abusing their authority over their innocent virgins, these men concealed, in the privacy of the religious mysteries, their crimes and their pleasures.

"Mycerine, lovely as the morning star, had before, at the festival of the "Great River," attracted the notice of

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the furious Buris. But, ignorant of the grief and of the designs of this young Egyptian, he made no doubt but that her vows, which he regarded as fruitless, were near their expiration; and that she would come of her own accord, and submit herself to his dangerous power.

"When he beheld this youthful beauty advancing, bathed in tears, to make her vows at the altars, Buris, burning with hope and with desire, passed rapidly over the customary trials, of which the bare recital appals the mind. Occupied solely by the happiness of possessing so rare a treasure, he readily admitted Mycerine to the number of the women who had devoted themselves to those holy employments. What was the fate of Amenophis when he discovered his misfortune?—His reason almost forsook him: his agony was the more excruciating, as only two days had to pass before the arrival of those festivals so much wished for, and whereon

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every barrier, which had separated him from Mycerene, would fall of itself. He knew not what to determine. Sometimes, distracted by his frenzy, he wished to punish her; sometimes, seeking a ray of hope amidst the discouragements which almost overpowered him, he would discard every malicious scheme from his thoughts. At length he formed the most rash and daring design of visiting Mycerine. To conceive, and to execute it, were to him only the work of an instant.

"The Egyptian priests spared no trouble or care, that could for the time contribute to establish their power, to throw an impenetrable shade over their pretended mysteries, or perpetuate the ignorance of a people whose credulity had subjected them to their yoke.

"The women, entrusted with the rearing of the sacred animals, not able, under any pretext, to leave the "Great Pyramid," received from the hands of slaves the food which had been pre-

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pared for them. But these slaves could not enter the lower apartment without having their eyes tied up. Every thing which they beheld as far as this dreadful door was calculated to infuse terror into their minds.

"Subterranean noises, contrived with much art, the vapour which they diffused through these immense buildings, the pale and tremulous light, which only imparted a momentary and uncertain glimmering; such were the means invented by the artful and designing to disturb and appal the imaginations of the timid.

"When they had entered the lower apartment, the bandage prevented them from fixing their profane thoughts either upon the interior of the temple or the sacred vestals; who, through the lengthened distrust of their tyrants, remained covered by a veil bedecked with hieroglyphical characters: but if the slave, through an unheard of presumption, should dare to lift the fillet, he was

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instantly punished with death, without being able to reap the fruit of his temerity.

"Amenophis, having bribed one of the slaves, dressed himself in his clothes, entered the pyramid, and, with his arms laden with the baskets which contained the provisions of the sacred animals, penetrated as far as the door of the sanctuary. It was Buris—Buris himself, that opened it! The features of Amenophis were unknown to him; he hardly looked upon this slave, and withdrew, making signs to the women who followed him to receive from his hand the covered baskets which he had brought them. Amenophis had learnt, by private information, that Mycerine was to receive the provisions that day. He advanced with a palpitating heart, and bowed himself. Mycerine approached him—what a moment for them both! when Amenophis, softly pressing her hand, obliged her to lift towards him for a moment her eyes,

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before modestly declined. She recognized him! She stood before him immoveably fixed, dumb and frozen with terror: her knees bent, and the baskets almost fell from her hands. The fear of betraying him, and, above all, of losing her lover, supported her. Nevertheless the struggles which she made with herself to dissemble her trouble did not enable her to move a single step, and, while her companions carried away the baskets which she had given to them, she remained motionless before Amenophis. This moment was too valuable to be lost! but what boldness was required to improve it! Nothing is impossible for love. Without reflecting, without obtaining the consent of Mycerine, whom her fear, her happiness, and her surprise, had left in a state of stupor, he lifted his bandage! the night which approached, favoured him; the feebleness of the light which shone in the temple concealed as yet his rashness; the door of the sanctuary remain-

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ed open; and, with the exception of the lower apartment, the had nothing to apprehend. He seized Mycerine, raised her into his eager arms, pressed her to his breast, and fled through the immense labyrinths of the pyramid with the rapidity of lightning. He soon reached the outer door; he passed it, and pursuing his course across the sandy desert, stopped not till in an hour's time he arrived on the banks of the Nile, exhausted with fatigue, and almost weighed down by his precious burthen, by her whom he had delivered from the hands of her persecutors.—Mycerine, dismayed, and hardly able to breathe, having had no time to oppose or to consent to the bold undertaking of her lover, dreaded to betray him by uttering the feeblest cry. Amenophis had conveyed her far from the pyramid before she recovered the use of her senses.—When, after she had come to herself, she saw her error, the extent of their offence, and their common danger,

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she was inclined to give her lover a gentle reproof. But alas! what a spectacle did she behold! The exertions which Amenophis had made in running over the burning sand had exhausted his powers; his blood hardly circulated, the movements of his heart had almost ceased, and it beat but feebly; his life seemed to be suspended. Mycerine threw herself upon him and endeavoured to revive him with her breath; she succeeded, at length, in recovering him, but not in restoring his strength. He unclosed his languishing eyes, and seemed, before he had power to speak, to conjure her by a tender and supplicating look to forgive his fault. She understood his thoughts, and taking his hand in her own found that he breathed, and forgave him every thing. This tender assurance revived him. The fruit of the palm tree was pressed to his lips by her soft hands, and the waters of the great river washed away from his feet the scorching sand which

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had attached to them. "Great goddess!" exclaimed Amenophis, "hear my wishes! May I once more behold death so near, and enjoy the happiness of owing my life to Mycerine!"

"Such is the power of love! There are no seasons of terror, or situations of distress which it will not convert into happiness. Far removed from all relief, without the faintest hope of escaping the punishment which awaited them, and forsaken on the scorching sand of the desert, Amenophis and his love enjoyed happiness.—Happiness! alas! it was but a dream! Suddenly the plain sparkled with the light of torches. The priests and the soldiers, conducted and excited by the fiery Buris, spread themselves over the neighbourhood and along the banks of the Nile. In what manner shall they avoid them? Thy weak feet, O Mycerine! refuse to second thy endevours! Amenophis in vain attempted to bear her again in his arms; he could not support

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her: he arose, but fell again; once more he lifted himself, and in his unavailing fury bit the sand, to which he seemed to be fixed. Ah! had the tender Mycerine the swiftness of the doe or of the antelope of the desert, would she abandon Amenophis alone to the vengeance of their enemies! She loves rather to share in his fate. Ah! could they but sacrifice that which they love, the waters of the river should become their asylum and their tomb! This thought engrossed all their attention;—but how find courage to put it in execution? The same idea consumed them both:—they understood one another without daring to communicate their design. They crawled, they dragged themselves along; they wished to aid and to lend one another a fatal assistance, in order to reach at length the steep banks of the river. But alas! Mycerine alone had preserved any remains of strength, which she now ex-

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hausted. The executioners advanced; they were surrounded by an immense crowd of soldiers. Mycerine is taken captive. The enraged Buris wished them to treat Amenophis with more severity; but his madness at not being able to defend Mycerine from the ferocity of their pursuers, his struggles with himself, and his distress, had overpowered the unhappy lover, and he lay motionless on the ground. Buris, believing him dead, ordered him to be thrown into the river to be the prey of voracious fish: he had the audacity also to boast of having completed his happiness in finding Mycerine once more in his hands. She sought in vain a last resource in a feeble resistance; they dragged her off. She cast a last look towards Amenophis, and went away, hoping that the appearances of death would save him from the sword of their tyrants.

"Buris, knowing at length his rival,

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set no bounds to his audacity: but his love and his anger had no other effect than that of rendering him more odious.

"Mycerine had now lost her happiness; she had almost lost her life; and she hearkened to Buris with a view of delaying his criminal designs; but he did not believe her, and his depraved mind could not raise him to the firmness of her whom he burned to disgrace.

"Let us now return to Amenophis, left motionless on the banks of the Nile. The coolness of the night revived his spirits. Before the dawn brightened the horizon the antelopes grazed upon the silent plain. In vain do fishermen appear at a distance. All is death to Amenophis since he has lost Mycerine. In the mean while the fishermen approach this unfortunate lover, they compassionate his weakness and his sufferings, and are lavish in their assistance; but they cannot answer his enquiries. The shades of night

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had veiled the crimes of Buris, and the first beams of the morning had alone summoned the fishermen from their barks.

"Through their kind exertions Amenophis was soon in a situation to regain the city. He arrived—before the news of the tragical end of Mycerine had been spread abroad. This victim of tyranny, in a letter addressed to her parents, and delivered secretly by a slave, declared to them the occasion of her death, her affection, and the persecutions which had determined her to withdraw herself from the light of day.

"After Amenophis was informed of this last misfortune, his eyes ceased to be moistened by tears; his mouth could no longer give utterance to his feelings; and he remained a considerable time secluded from the world. At length he withdrew himself from the care and the tender consolations of his friends and his parents, and tore himself from their arms. A desperate hope, which

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he scarcely dared to divulge, reconciled him yet a moment to life. He found out, and gained over by gold, those to whom had been entrusted the charge of embalming the body of Mycerine.

" He was secretly admitted into the place consecrated to these funerals and last duties. At the appearance of the dreary abode of her whom he adored, he was seized by a gloomy despair, and filled with holy reverence. Suddenly he threw himself on her cold body; he retraced and contemplated that enchanting beauty, late the ornament of the world, and the admiration of every eye. He stopped the embalmers, and cried in mournful accents—' Mycerine, O! my beloved Mycerine! As I cannot in this life be thine, would, at least, the same earth covered our remains!'—As he uttered these words he cut his hair, and formed it into tresses, and moistened them with his tears. They served for bandages, and bound

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for ever the honoured remains of his much loved Mycerine. But this was not enough; he tore open one of his veins, and bathed with his blood the flowers which his trembling hand had placed upon her heart. This great effort was his last; he could no longer bear the horrible images which surrounded him—he seized a bloody sword—then exclaiming, O death! thou shalt take two victims!—he stabbed himself and fell at her feet. Thy tender soul, as it ascends towards heaven, yet regrets that which remains with Mycerine on the earth."

THE GREEKS.

THE women of ancient Egypt, slaves according to some, but according to others almost free, were in this account in a state more than uncertain. What results, however, from the contradic-

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tions of writers, and what ought to be observed, is, that, whatever may have been their lot, many among them attained to esteem and celebrity, and even sometimes to temporary authority; and that the energy which alone burst the chains of slavery, that character which compelled mankind to elevate those whom they wished to condemn to oblivion, has, in spite of the laws of every description which were intended to enslave them, raised them to important offices in every nation and in every age of the world.

We shall now direct our eyes towards ancient Greece. What an enchanting prospect does this country, so fertile in wonders, present! When, conducted by the ingenious and learned Barthelemy, we follow the young Anacharsis in his travels, it appears that the more able he is to paint his models, the more does he raise them in excellence, and the less do his most perfect pictures approach to the reality! What splendour has he

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been able to cast upon a country governed by the most eloquent men that ever existed; where all the means of pleasure and seduction were employed; where the fire of genius blazed without intermission; where, at almost the same instant, Pericles obtained a splendid victory, Demosthenes thundered from the tribune, Socrates opened a school of wisdom, Praxiteles drew all Athens into his workshop, and Alcibiades shone, at the same time, in combat, in council, and in the closet; while Aspasia, so much adored by great men, united them all at her feet.

Towards the conclusion of the Peloponnesian war the women of Attica, collected together within the walls of Athens, bore the amiable form and grace of the Ionians. Aspasia, born at Miletus, the capital of Ionia, carried with her, under another sky, the elegance of the Asiatics. Her manners regulated those of all the courtezans; but this fascinating philosopher, who afterwards by the

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single word "atticism" recals to the imagination so many pleasures and allurements, and so much politeness, does not even notice the illustrious wives of Athens.

Their husbands, acquainted with the natural force of their passions, shut up within their houses their wives and their daughters with a strictness which bordered upon distrust, and savoured of tyranny. Apprehending also that they ought not to be instructed in the arts, or to be suffered to give themselves up to more serious acquirements, they prohibited them masters of every kind, and allowed them, for their only pleasures and employments, the various duties of housekeeping. Thus, while the courtezans cultivated the arts, frequented the portico, charmed the philosophers and the artists, animated that genius of which they collected the sparks, established between them in a manner a mutual exchange of instruction, of enthusiasm, and of delightful sensations;

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the married women, almost forgotten and lost in the minute cares of domestic life, as remote from their own age in understanding as in education, rather recalled those days of rude simplicity which marked the primeval inhabitants of the world; for they do not appear as if they belonged to that Greece, whose splendid ruins yet afford so many enjoyments. Hence arose the celebrity of the Athenian courtezans. The fine arts were necessarily relinquished to them by the injustice of the laws, which prohibited them to the married women. They gave themselves up to them, and contributed to their progress; and, arraying themselves in the splendour which they borrowed from them, secured for themselves the homage of their own age by their success, and the admiration of ours by the remembrance.

Nothing, however, contributed more to the corruption of manners than this superiority of the courtezans over the

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chaste women. From the time that the Athenians abandoned the port of Phaleron, there arrived so great a number of brilliant women, that, through the dissolution of their morals, they drew upon themselves the animadversion of the republic. Things came to that extreme, that it was proposed to levy an impost upon them. It was discussed, defended, and supported by Demosthenes against the courtezan Mera. It was established, and for a long time collected.

Whilst, under the yoke of the laws of Athens, the women passed their days in oblivion, Lycurgus, on the other hand, at Lacedemon, accustomed them to the severest toils; to wrestle in public, to dart the javelin, and to exercise themselves for the course, and in the sports of the gymnasium. This philosophical legislator, acting upon a principle apparently wise, feared not to unveil their beauties and expose them to the eyes of the men, undisguised by dress; ex-

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pecting he should, by this means, be able to blunt the edge of desire. The Lacedemonian women, stimulating by jests the young men who had not been able to obtain the prize of the public games, seemed to be altogether taken up with ideas of glory; and, at the same time that they concealed not any of their charms, could inspire all the fires of love. What a contrast between the manners of Athens and those of Lacedemon! But were not these consequences to the honour of that feeble sex, whom the Greeks, according to their caprice, seem to have disposed of as a property?

Let us judge the whole of the conduct of women, and the duties which devolved to them from their situation. The noble Athenians were obliged to remain in their houses; where they displayed an example of all the domestic virtues; and even gave instruction to the courtezans, among that people who esteemed nothing but valour and elo-

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quence, and who were led more by their imaginations than by their manners. These courtezans, again, animated the courage of the warriors, spoke with a purity of diction which distinguished them, and made their houses the asylums of genius and of taste. Philosophers and warriors solicited the honour of being admitted to their circles; and imparted to these enchantresses an influencing power, which they afterwards used in regulating the affairs of those who gave it to them. Aspasia decided the question of war or peace; Phryne obtained a statue of gold in the temple at Delphi, between those of two kings. Demosthenes himself, so terrible to tyrants, was led captive by a courtezan; and it is said of him, that "what he had been meditating for a year, was in one day overturned by a woman."

In the military convent of Lacedemon, on the contrary, the women were required to forget their sex; and, immediately, their grace was converted

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into strength, their fascination into skill, and their sprightliness into energy. They not only became the rivals of the men in the more severe exercises, but also bore away from them the palm of courage.

At no time has it more clearly appeared that this versatile sex is adapted for all employments, and that there is in them a something supernatural which corresponds to every thought, to every sentiment, and to every scheme. But, perhaps, it is necessary that its value should be estimated by others, and that it is itself incapable of ascertaining its own power. It is seldom, however, that women, unless driven by circumstances, contrive with wisdom and forethought; and we therefore perceive that they often employ themselves in executing what they had not designed. Every exertion is to them possible in their enthusiasm, when they have recourse to it; but they seldom know of themselves how to submit to the labour

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of reflection, in order to avert the evils they may have prepared.

The same woman who would not sacrifice a pleasure to save you from a danger to come, will, the moment after, give her life to preserve you. In one word, nothing is to be obtained from them through prudence, but every thing by interesting their sensibility.

The Greeks, full of sense, and guided by a delicate feeling which enlightened them on all their means of enjoyment, were of all people those who, at the same time that they were acquainted with the best women, took respecting them the most happy part. In considering them, however, as calculated for all employments, they acknowledged that attempting to unfold in the same woman all those opposite qualities with which nature has endowed the sex, would be a sure mean of not properly enjoying any one of them. These amiable and voluptuous Greeks, the natural worshippers of talents and of grace,

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but, at the same time, fond of order in their houses, jealous of their authority over their consorts, and respecting their virtues as the safeguards of the education of their children, were sensible that in the sacred condition of wife splendour is prejudicial to esteem, the pleasant to the essential accomplishments; that, in their turn, severe duties weaken the means of pleasure, and the strict laws of modesty frighten luxury; which, in such troublesome chains, loses her charms and her empire. All the social relations were in Greece formed after this principle, which was, however, extended too far, without wishing, as in France, to find, in any respects, two women in one. Providence has divided this amiable sex into two very distinct classes; the one devoted to pleasure, the other consecrated to more serious duties; the one seeking esteem as a recompence, the other the praise and homage of men. I repeat it: the French, less reasonable than the Greeks, expect

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from their wives too many of those enjoyments which are incompatible with and prejudicial to one another: hence arises so much bad domestic management, so much injustice in our judgments concerning women, and so much incoherence in the principles of the education which we give to our younger females. Let a mother render an impartial account of the lessons which she gives her daughter in order to make her what, in Paris, we call an amiable woman, and she will acknowledge that she has often, in less than two hours, taught her that which might at the same time merit for her the esteem and the contempt of her husband; secure his success, and for ever destroy his happiness. The Athenians too much enslaved and neglected their wives; the French inure them too much to pleasure; the English, more wise in their calculations, have observed in this respect a very just medium. Attached by character to exemplary principles, the bosoms of

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their families are more pure and decent, and yield them a durable happiness; but which cannot fail of being impaired, if the corruption of our manners should ever reach them.

Every thing was managed at Athens with such prudent forethought, that every woman, in her class, seemed contented with her situation. If a submissive wife placed her happiness in the discharge of her domestic duties, the enchanting Aspasia, intoxicated with success, with the splendour of her existence, with her power and her charms, would not exchange her condition of a courtezan of Greece for one of the thrones of Asia.

Wishing, one day, to seduce a young Grecian female into the career of pleasure, she wrote her a letter, which I here transcribe. Perhaps it will display to the reader, in a more agreeable manner than a series of details, the extent of the influence of the courtezans at Athens, and the immense distance

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which separated them from those women who, modestly ignorant of the public, reared in silence those great men whose triumphs they prepared.

A LETTER FROM ASPASIA TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

"Well, my dear Alpais, I at length find a mean of sending to thee, by a faithful slave, this letter; which since the watchfulness of thy father keeps me from thee with so much strictness, shall make up for all that I am unable otherwise to communicate to thee. What does he wish? to marry thee, to bury thee in the tedious solitude of a house, where one and the same rotation of duties shall consume thy days; where thy wit, thy graces, and the talents which thou hast acquired in private, shall be hidden for ever, and not receive the homage which is justly their due.

"What do I, on the contrary propose to thee? to pursue the same career

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with myself; to reap every success, to taste every pleasure; and, like the diamond which is taken from the envelope that conceals its lustre, to be seen, to shine with all the brilliancy of thy charms, to be admired, and sought after. Hear me!—If heaven have bestowed upon thee only those common beauties, in which fatigued nature seems but to have sketched her work; if thy mind, formed with an ordinary temper, shoot only ideas without colour, offer only those slow conceptions which promise but a dull futurity, and denote even in the age of the passions, a frigid mind, I tell thee, "follow the advice of thy father. Be a wife, the mother of a family; rear thy children, prepare the wool which we send to Corinth, and form materials for thy husband's cloak; watch over thy slaves, and never walk abroad without a veil—whom wilt thou get to notice thee? Alcibiades, in going to Lycias, would no longer stop to see thee; would not

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follow thee in order to discover thy residence. Praxiteles would not admire thee, nor seek in thee the grace which is yet wanting in his Venus. Demosthenes would not, on seeing thee, remain near thee in the public place, nor forget the moment he should enter the tribune to combat against Philip. Go; I would tell thee, nature has devoted thee to obscurity; she classes all in the great chain of her works. Admiration is not for thee. Reason calls upon thee, follow her voice, and her precepts, and, if thou art able, be happy in the gloomy enjoyments which she presents to thee."—But no; my Alpais is a masterpiece of beauty and of elegance; nature has done every thing for her; she wants nothing more in order to enchant but the last secrets of the art, and even these she seems to have divined. Her mind shines without seeming to wish it; and announces that it is attended by a genius which will soon appear. A keen originality,

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an amiable and alluring cheerfulness, a soft and delightful gaiety, are all thy own. Heaven, in order to crown its work, by giving thee an ardent heart, a soul of fire, seemed in producing thee to say: "born to grace the earth, go, taste all its pleasures; kindle every desire, and every passion; live to charm the eye, to be the glory of thy sex, to be the happiness of thy lover, and to intoxicate thyself with all the delights which become thy nature."

"Examine Alpais and consider. The Greek islanders have, from their situation more pure manners than all Greece besides, and even our smiling Athens. The austere Lacedemon may offer a pleasing wreath to virtue. The rustic simplicity of Thebes presents a striking contrast to the happy Corinth, which, from its situation and commerce, seems to invite riches, luxury and pleasures. Thou livest at Athens; nothing can ever banish thee to Lacedemon, where the laws of Lycurgus op-

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press our sex, and degrade it by a wrong application of its power. Leave this ridiculously ingenious philosopher, to wish the young beauties to be exposed undisguised to the eyes of the men, to stifle thereby their desires: it is not thus that our veils must fall. I shall instruct thee in another mode! I love delicate pleasures, but gross indecency I abhor. What a barbarian is this Lycurgus! What! wish that we should repel pleasure! Is this the design of nature? is this our destination, Alpais? Open at length thine eyes. Those who, in Lacedemon, would expose us without art to the curious eye of youth, and those who would in Athens conceal us under an eternal veil, render beauty solitary, condemn us to the obscure prison of a family, and prohibit us the arts, the talents, and all the means which contribute to fascination, are equally absurd and cruel; be thou very sure that they fear us. We may find the traces of our empire

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in the solicitude which they use to destroy all our means of pleasure.

"Thus then, thanks to this cold philosophy which computes every thing, and withers every thing, we should be reduced to a dependence on the caprice of the men, whose only superiority over us consists in their strength, a gross and common quality which they are even obliged to disguise in using it against us. Thus then, sad supplement of the social order; we should be doomed by them to an eternal servitude! But, to the honour of our sex, it appertained to Greece to produce enterprising women; who, filled with just sentiments of their inherent powers, knew how to break their degrading bonds, to elevate themselves above the laws, to form a separate class, almost a distinct nation in the same country; and, resuming the place appointed to them by nature, to shine with all the lustre which belongs to their character, to receive every homage, and see all men at

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their feet. See what an existence do I offer thee among that amiable people who are altogether led by their imaginations; among those men who have more law than principle; that tender and voluptuous nation the enthusiasts of beauty, and the worshippers of the arts, who seem to have been born for glory, for pleasure, and love. Every thing my Alpais assures us of an empire as brilliant as durable. Tired themselves of those severe manners which they have established in their families, these Greeks, naturally tender, are always at variance with their laws; and whilst tyrants with their wives, they become our slaves. Behold that tomb, which attracts and fixes the attention of strangers, covetous of our monuments! Is it the remembrancer of a warrior? of a poet? of a philosopher? it is to the memory of one of us who shone in Athens, and subjected all to her charms! She is no more! but the incense still burns on her ashes:

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All is yet love around the tomb! View the immortal Venus of the immortal Praxiteles; as the goddess did not descend to the earth, who could serve for the model? Praxiteles, tormented by a secret desire of producing this masterpiece, made wretched by the internal struggles of his genius to conceive, and with his inability to execute it, was one day walking on the banks of the Cephisus, at the time less agitated than himself. Suddenly Phryne offered herself to the eyes of the astonished artist, with no other dress than her dishevelled hair! Dazzled by so many beauties, his genius was kindled and enflamed, and the sparks shot forth with his chisel; the marble breathed, and Venus herself arose before him! She received a crown of myrtles, Praxiteles laurels, and Phryne altars.

Religion, too, seems to interfere in our existence. Has not the goddess of beauty a temple? Does she not protect us by a species of worship? how many

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times has this fickle people rendered homage to Lais, and to Glycera, for the victories of Themistocles, in seeing them implore Venus in his behalf!— Burst, then, my dear Alpais, the bonds which confine thee. Save thyself from a disgraceful obscurity. Once near thy friend, fear not the pursuit of thy family. I will plead thy cause even in the Areopagus; eloquence is not foreign to me. More than once have Socrates, Demosthenes, and Pericles, refined in my society their taste, and the delicacy of their conversation. I will defend thee, and prove to that people so easily to be enflamed, and who are as desirous to inspire as they are to receive admiration, that arts and talents challenge thee; that the homage of Greece waits upon thee; and that thy success appertains to its celebrity."

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THE FIRST ROMANS.

AMONG the first Romans, a more austere people than the Greeks, and who were during five hundred years ignorant of arts and of pleasures, the women held for a considerable time a becoming and a noble rank, and displayed in their conduct all the virtues which gave birth to the wisdom of their laws and to the energy of their first institutions. These men, wholly occupied in labour and conquest, and from their manners and their courage overbearing, returned victorious from battle, and flew into the arms of their wives with that pure enthusiasm which inspired the chastity of one sex, and the fidelity of the other. Esteeming and respecting their wives, all their laws were made favourable to the women, and were characterized more by wisdom than by distrust and menace.

The women, always given up to do-

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mestic cares, knew no pleasure but in discharging their duties. To nourish and rear their children, to spin the yarn requisite for clothing their husbands, and, in their absence to pray to the gods for their success and their return; were the employments of their days, and the objects of all their thoughts.

A barbarous law of Romulus had, nevertheless, lodged in the hands of the husbands a power of life and death over their wives. In the infancy of the republic it must be expected that the institutions should savour of the rudeness of those fierce and warlike men. But this absolute power of the husbands turned ultimately to the advantage of the women. Although obliged to obey and to yield, they held for a considerable while all authority and controul; not by that shrewd artifice, that refinement of conduct and coquetry, which is the shining and dangerous fruit of corrupt manners, but by the dignity of

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their principles and the austerity of their manners.

Coriolanus, justly incensed against his country, only spared it through the intreaties of his mother; to whom an altar was raised in the very place where the vengeance of a hero yielded to the voice of a woman, and to the commanding influence of her virtues. I might cite a thousand other instances, did they not belong rather to the history of celebrated women than to that of the sex in general, which is the end of my work.

In order to judge properly of the spirit of the first Romans, and ascertain the different relations in which the women were regarded among them, whether we do it from their actions or their laws, we must not consider them either in the time of Romulus, when the people were barbarians, or at an age when their manners had become depraved; but rather

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about the time of Coriolanus, of whom I have just spoken. At this time their ferocity had been softened, and might be regarded as not more than austerity; and the subjection of the women, was a mere simple acknowledgment of the absolute power of their husbands; a power of which they often possessed themselves in their turn; not indeed like usurpers, but like friends and companions, like competitors for glory and for virtue, worthy of participating in their triumphs.

Every precaution was used in Rome to maintain that purity of manners, and that grave modesty, which rendered the women not less important to the state, from the influence which they acquired through their greatness of mind, and through those qualities which enabled them to controul the conduct of their husbands, than necessary from their wisdom and their devotion. The laws were planned and framed upon that principle of order, which, by regulat-

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ing the interiour of private families, purifies the great family of the people.

But the nature of things is stronger than the will of man. The constitution of a society is altered as it advances onward from its birth: And in proportion as a nation seeks to form itself, obstacles create labour. All the powers are in motion; all the virtues of the two sexes are in esteem: must not the nation then be powerful? But the cessation of resistance produces idleness. Repose, the very peace even which they desire, the arts to which it gives birth, and which are its ornaments, terminate by corrupting the nation itself, and by triumphing over the laws; which are always powerful in danger and weak in security. The time whereon the Roman matrons began to appear in public was a fatal moment, and forms a remarkable æra in history. Until that period they had lived retired in their families. But lux-

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ury tempted them, and admiration seduced them; they designed rather to please than to be beloved. They sought pleasures and forgot their duties; they aimed at art instead of nature.

We no longer have to speak of that illustrious Veturia, bending the anger of her son, and obtaining a public decree for her reward; by which the men yielded the precedency to the women; we quote no more the famous Portia, the daughter of Cato, nor that Julia, the wife of Pompey, who died of grief on beholding a robe of her husband's stained with blood; nor yet that young Roman who, with her own milk, sustained her father in prison. These were not the women who, in the time of Brennus, saved Rome by offering their gold, and who thus merited the honour of being admitted to the tribune as magistrates and warriors; nor those heroines who, after the battle of Cannæ, gave to the state

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all their trinkets and jewels. Instead of those austere republicans we no longer behold any but trifling women, who, having formed an idea of a new reputation, are occupied by talents, and by dress: and who, by the constant desire of pleasing and alluring, sink from glory and esteem.

The last revolution in the manners of the women happened at the time the Romans lost their liberty. I shall speak of it in the ensuing chapter; for I have thought it necessary to divide into separate parts the age of the emperors, and that of the republic.

But in order to shew to what a degree the manners had been depraved, even before the emperors, among those powers which ought rather to have set a contrary example, I shall cite the following anecdote; it shews through what circumstance (according to some writers) they placed the name of Flora, for the first time, in the list of their divinities.

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A certain courtezan, named Flora, through the folly and lavish bounty of her lovers, died very rich; and left her property to the republic on condition that they would every year celebrate a festival in honour of her. Dreadful embarrassment! The senate, having ruined the state by dilapidations of every kind, and finding itself placed between the desire of receiving an immense heritage, and the shame of passing a decree for celebrating the memory of a courtezan, feigned that she was a goddess called among the Greeks Chloris, and Flora among the Latins; and that having been married to Zephyrus, she had received from him the empire of the flowers.

By this artifice, as vile in its end as ridiculous in its form, the festival was decreed: it was called Floralia, and was celebrated on the first of May, with great licentiousness. The courtezans appeared at it altogether naked; and it was usual to sing there songs which

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breathed debauchery, and afford us a melancholy picture of the dissolution of their manners.

THE AGE OF THE EMPERORS.

We have now seen women in different climates, governed by opposite laws, triumphing over the caprice of men, and finishing by retaining over them more or less influence, even in the midst of the slavery to which their despotism had reduced them. We have at length arrived at a period when Rome, given up to every vice, no longer looked upon the women but as the rewards and the accomplices of the corruption of manners. Never, perhaps, was there an epoch more disgraceful to this sex, which loses every thing when it loses its modesty, and oversteps the boundaries of chastity. Women, the most distinguished by

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their rank, are seen disputing with one another for a buffoon as if for gold. Licentiousness had no more any restraint. The horrid science of abortion was perfected; a licentious intoxication led the women to multiply the number of those Asiatic monsters, in order to satisfy their unruly desires, without having to fear the consequences. Every day invented some new species of disorder. The laws, which had not been able to anticipate all the degrees of crime, became too feeble: they awoke themselves too late; justly frightened at the number of criminals, they concealed them, and, having too many to punish, condemned them to oblivion. From this moment every barrier was broken down. In order to escape the remorse of yesterday they prepared the crimes of the morrow. Never had women more freedom, more splendour, and less dominion. When they lead nothing but the passions, to what is their power

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reduced! This is a simple natural attraction, which it is as little flattering to inspire as to feel. By its short continuance, it anticipates the disgust of the rapid and fugitive enjoyments to which it conducts us. What does it become, in stripping itself of all that enchanting fascination of love and modesty, the true delight of the mind, the delicious sensation of the heart, which, in the midst of pleasure itself, far from allaying its delirium, offers us a new source of enthusiasm, and of charms? This last revolution, which deserves to be marked in the history of women, took place under the emperors. There were, nevertheless, in the midst of this general depravity, some women who distinguished themselves in different ways.

Octavia, the wife of Anthony, the sister of Augustus, and the tender and virtuous rival of Cleopatra, was one of those whom nature seemed to produce with a view of shewing that,

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whatever were the manners of the age, there have always existed some women to vindicate the honour of their sex.

Portia, worthy of being entrusted with the secrets of a conspiracy which might decide the fate of the world, died with the same firmness as Cato, her father. Aria assisted her husband to resign his life, by first stabbing herself with the poniard which she presented to him.

Paulina mingled her blood with that of Seneca. Agrippina, the wife of Germanicus, defied Tiberius in her exile, and, rising superior to the manners of her age, consumed her life in lamenting her husband. Eponina received a glorious death through the treachery of Vespasian; and, to complete their glory, these women merited the eternal honour of being celebrated by the pen of Tacitus.

A single glance over the history of celebrated women is sufficient to recall to the reader those whom I do not

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name. There is one, however, whom I cannot pass by in silence; it is the Empress Julia, the wife of Septimus Severus; she was born in Syria, and was the daughter of a priest of the Sun. It was foretold of her that she should ascend the throne; and this prophecy did not delay to be accomplished.

A stateswoman, she obtained the confidence of her husband; who, without loving her, governed only by her councils. She cultivated letters, passed her life in instructing herself; and, dividing her time between pleasure and business, occupied with men of genius in her study, with the most amiable men of Rome in her palace, and with the greatest interests on her throne, she attained to a merited celebrity. In the reign of her son she possessed the same influence as during that of her husband.

Although, however, she had received to her share so many talents, and was

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a woman of genius, yet, as she possessed not the chief merit of her sex, and as her philosophy did not form her manners, she was more commended than respected, and her memory has yielded more splendour than it has commanded veneration. "Can we," says M. Thomas, "forget that famous Zenobia, so worthy of the lessons of Longinus? who knew equally how to please, to write, and to vanquish; and who, bearing her misfortunes with as much philosophy as greatness of soul, found in the resources of her own mind all the enjoyments which she had lost in descending from her throne?" The same author making an observation as just as it is full of ingenuity, presents, in his "Essay on Women," the progress of events, and almost determines the period of the change of manners by the eulogies of the women of that time who were honoured with the Roman tribunals.

"That of Junia, the sister of Brutus,

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and the wife of Cassius, was the eulogy of virtue, yet severe and republican. The second, wherein Livia, the mother of Tiberius is celebrated, marks the passage of the manners of women from a republic to their manners in a court, and under a prince. But the eulogy of Poppæa, pronounced by an emperor, and applauded by the Romans, announced, so to speak, the last limit of corruption." To what cause, then, is the dissoluteness, into which Rome was at that time sunk, to be attributed? Is it the women that we are to charge with it? Were they the legislators? Was it possible for them to arrest the course of the vices which, like a torrent, had invaded all conditions?

I know that women often form the manners, but they cannot, of themselves, maintain them. They have been seen to encourage virtues, and even to inspire them; but can they at the same time combat, and employ themselves to destroy, a specious cor-

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ruption, which assumes a thousand amiable forms in order to contribute to their pleasures? Let us be just.

Women, always secondary, and without hopes of acquiring glory, can only associate with our sex. It is for men to atchieve great things, it is for women to inspire them. Woe to them if we establish a vicious order; they could but be corrupted along with us, or else remain immaculate alone, in the midst of the general depravity, without power ever to reform the state of society, or oppose themselves to the invasions of vice.

One man may alone reform the manners of a community; but many virtuous females united have it not in their power. The first Romans owed, without doubt, a part of their energy, and of their virtues, to the precious qualities of this sex; but in order that women should inflame our minds, and excite us to worthy deeds, the inclination towards the good must be already

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determined. What influence had the Portias, and the Arias, in Rome when the empire was falling into decay? None. Let us not then require of the women what we cannot hope from them. They have understanding, and sometimes genius; too susceptible not to be agitated by passion; too volatile to form laws; to submit themselves is the greatest effort of which they are capable. To excite the object which they esteem to the love of glory; to sacrifice, likewise, their sentiments to his honour, and his duty; to be our counsellors, our supporters, our consolations in sufferings, the source of our most perfect enjoyments; these are the ends for which they are placed with us on the earth.

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THE BIRTH OF CHRISTIANITY.

We have been able thus far to observe the influence of governments and of laws on the manners of women. After several successive ages a change was effected, which went in some measure to purify and renew the morals of this sex, too weak to stem the torrent of licentiousness.

We have successively seen the women among the patriarchs reduced to the simple employment of a mother of a family; among the Egyptians treated with more consideration, and always regarded as alone the sources of happiness; in Greece sometimes neglected, as in Athens; sometimes, as among the Lacedemonians, exposed, in a state of nudity, to the curious eyes of the men, and, at the same time, the victims of a cold and criminal philosophy, which, by misplacing, degraded them. They held

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a more respectable situation in Rome, in the first ages of the republic; but soon afterwards, abandoned to all its dissoluteness, and all its dangers, they are seen to follow the Roman empire in its decline, to partake of its corruption, and involve themselves in its ruin. Such was the gradual progress of the manners and the conditions of women so far as the reign of Tiberius.

At length Christianity arose: it came to offer to mankind a safe system of morals, of present and of future happiness; it proposed to them as their glory a reconciliation to the supreme Being, as an end in adopting it, sweet consolations on the earth, and as a reward for persevering in it, an eternal rest in heaven.

Until that time the women, unsettled in their desires, and subdued even in their thoughts; and unacquainted with any other light than the transient glimmerings of pleasure, waited without hope. Having become Christians, they

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subdued their passions and their reason; and, warmed by a pure and vivid flame, they elevated themselves to the divine love, and tasted that anticipated happiness which faith inspires in our breasts even in adversity.

It is on these tender minds, above all others, that the law of Christ ought to exercise all its influence. They were, in fact, the first to embrace these religious doctrines, which, corresponding to all the secret movements of their hearts, to their natural fondness for pity, for love, and for devotion, proposed to them engaging occupations, and enjoyments without remorse. It is difficult to delineate the amazing revolution which this period effected.

Christianity, severe in its principles, but proffering forgiveness, substituted the reign of the mind for that of the passions. If politics and philosophy altogether related to the interests of society, the new legislation made this world appear as an empty shadow, from

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which every thing ought to alienate us, and the world to come as the only object which should occupy our thoughts, and direct our hopes. Every thing was purified. Disgrace attached itself to licentiousness. The women, become more modest, lamented the want of chastity, imposed sacrifices upon themselves, and humbled themselves in order to be elevated. Crimes diminished from the necessity, and the obligation they were under of impeaching themselves. Every one was desirous of a restraint, and regarded the limits of his desires and his passions; duties became pleasures; all the wise institutions which had fallen into decay were restored; vows were pronounced; indissoluble bonds were formed; and marriage, which before had been only an union by the simple agreement of the parties, became a sacred tie, solemnized and consecrated at the altar, and protected by the laws. A simple and pure morality offered itself as a support

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to the unfortunate, and a safeguard to the weak and the innocent.

Extinguishing hatred, and forbidding revenge, peace appeared to descend to the earth to invite the human race to love and support her; and religion, by uniting together the minds of all mankind, seemed to form one immense chain, which reached even to the throne of the Deity.

Every thing in this new worship served to render it agreeable to the women. It not only re-established a more equal balance between them and us, but corresponded in some measure to that inclination, always prevailing among them, to bring others into subjection, and to exercise their power. To convert is also a species of seduction; and the Christian women have, on this account, been seen to give themselves up to it with more ardour than the men*.

* St. Augustine was converted by his mother; and St. Jerome dedicated to women a great part of his works.

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England, France, part of Germany, Bavaria, Hungary, Bohemia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, and, during some time, Persia, received the gospel from the hands of beauty, and thousands of proselytes were the happy fruits of its charms and its grace.

This sensibility, so natural to women, a sensibility which love converts into a passion, was soon transformed by religion into a mild and consolatory pity. A desire of promoting the happiness of others, and of cheering the unfortunate, imparted to their minds a high degree of warmth and ardour.

Sacred asylums of misfortune were established, patronized, and overlooked by them. Weakness and commiseration triumphed, from the disgust with which horrid spectacles of distress must have filled them. The sick and the afflicted were taken care of, and their lamentations respected; and the tears which yet trickled down their cheeks were received into sympathising bosoms. We at length behold the women,

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those precious ornaments of the earth, becoming the refuge of the unfortunate, and the resources of the indigent. Persecution, likewise, which so severely tried the first Christians, afforded the women an opportunity for unfolding their virtues.

Religion, calm and efficient, had softened their hearts;—but when they were oppressed, threatened, and proscribed, it animated their courage, and elevated their sentiments; carried away by a holy enthusiasm, the first of them precipitated themselves on the funeral piles that supported the tyranny. Through such holy worship, and persuasive morality, Christianity, even in that which is mysterious and supernatural in it, enflamed yet more this susceptible and tender sex. Those very women who but lately, in the midst of praise and adoration, rivalled the lustre of their charms by the splendour of their dress, now, covered with sackcloth, forgot their attractions, and the feebleness of

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their sex, braved death, and even courted it; and, in a manner, freed from the objects of the present times, rushed forwards, in a religious delirium, into the abyss of futurity!

Let us not be astonished at this amazing fortitude. The worship which they defended with so much zeal protected their weakness. A series of new ideas and principles of conduct was established by it; and another constitution of society offered itself to their notice, in which they were able to acquire a rank more respectable than they held before, and totally independent of the men. If they remained in society, a sacred institution bound them to their husbands; if they devoted themselves to the altars, they depended for the future on God alone; and thus, in one word, they passed from slavery into freedom.

The following tale will prove to us to what a degree these new doctrines inflamed such tender minds; and may

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teach us in what manner to quench even the most violent passions by the ardour of a holy zeal.

APPIA.

A ROMAN STORY.

The young Appia lived in Rome at the time when Christianity was most cruelly persecuted. Descended from an illustrious family, and having been widowed for the space of two years from a husband whom she had esteemed without loving, difference of religion had alone prevented her from being married to the young Leon, rendered worthy of her hand by his rank and his fortune. Yielding to all the pleasures of her age, to luxury, and all the distractions which might have deprived her of true feeling, she was not the less tender. Formed more for loving than for delighting in the tumults of the world, the image of

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her lover followed her in the midst of the homages which continually attended her, and which she rejected when Leon, by his presence, did not impart to them a new charm. They both loved in silence; they beheld only themselves in the crowd, they found only themselves in their memories; and when returned to solitude, their thoughts were on the morrow carried back to the festivities of the evening before.

Affecting spectacle! These two lovers had preserved, in the midst of the general depravity, all their candour, all the purity of the primitive age; and, like two beautiful lilies growing in marshy ground, preserved an unsullied whiteness in the midst of unwholesome vapours. Leon, adoring Appia, burned to possess her hand; but he could not prevail upon himself to resign his religion for Christianity, which she had embraced. She tenderly reproached him; he defended himself badly, and could hardly resist; when, summoned

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by his duties, he was obliged to fly to the camp, and to separate himself from all he held most dear.—How affecting was their separation! How becoming was their suffering! and how deeply felt! At length, they were obliged to part; their tears increased, their arms opened a second time, and Leon departed. Alas! cruel absence, which robbed her of the charm of her life! Appia, thus isolated, sought no relief from the distractions and pleasures of a troublesome world; she lived retired in the bosom of her family. The holy exercises of a proscribed worship occupied in secret all her hours. After many months of suffering, with what astonishment was she struck when she felt that it was only at the feet of the altar that her grief seemed to assuage, and her tears to be arrested! She sought what it was that relieved her; and, notwithstanding the evils which threatened her, returned there oftener. Soon she passed there the whole day.

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A minister of heaven, as virtuous as wise, and who, in support of his faith, braved every day the prohibitions of the tyrants, was entrusted with her confidence; and her affections were deposited in the bosom of this holy friend. Could she inform him of any thing else? She had no faults to confess. Appia continually wrote to Leon; her ideas were as tender as they had ever been, but her expressions had less warmth. They breathed more of the sentiment of friendship than of passion. Leon felt so confident of success, that he was not alarmed at the change. Satisfied, from many reasons, that pious cares occupied her in his absence, he felt concerning her a secret satisfaction. He was even the least jealous of lovers; and was better pleased to behold his mistress at the feet of the altar than in the midst of an alluring world. Alas! Leon suspected not that the very altar which he secretly blessed might rob him of his mistress! The secret determinations

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of Appia were of too delicate a nature not to lead her to pursue the plan which her tenderness had likewise suggested to her.

She knew her power over Leon sufficiently well to be convinced that he would, on his return, adopt the religion of his mistress. But, alas! this hope even was no more allowed to her! The worship of Christ was now more persecuted than ever. No one could embrace it without devoting himself to certain death. To renounce the hand of Leon was, then, her only resource. Upon this she determined. But, in order to carry her design into execution, it would be necessary for her to deceive him; to make him believe that she had ceased to love him, and to calumniate her heart to save her lover. The last letter which Leon received from her, before the time of his return, was a thunderbolt! She aimed to apprize him in it of the change in her heart. What was he to do when he perceived that

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his mistress was desirous of separating from him! He arrives distracted, falls at her feet, employs intreaties, tears, and every thing which tenderness could suggest as most affecting; complaints, reproaches, frenzy, excuses; nothing succeeded. Appia, sustained by too powerful a motive, was immoveable. Ah! what did she not feel when it was better to perish with her lover than to rend his heart. But no, she was determined to save him; and she deprived him of every hope by declaring to him with firmness that he should see her no more.—Distracted, he exclaimed that he could not live without her; and that, in order to possess her hand, he would from that moment abjure the worship by which they were separated.—Let those who have felt the dreadful delirium of grief in losing what they loved, picture to themselves the horrible situation of Leon on seeing that Appia refused even his last sacrifice!—"No," my dear Leon," said she,

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" I will not conduct thee to death by accepting of thy devotion: the wretched Christians are all condemned victims; leave me to perish alone. More convinced than thou art on the doctrines I profess, I have alone the right to seal them with my blood. Fly then from me, O fly! avoid the cruel sight of my torments, of which thou shouldst not be a witness.—Farewel, for ever!"—She attempted to escape from his arms. He threw himself at her feet; he loathed his very existence, but he wished to pass the remainder of it near his Appia. Without yet partaking of the opinions of her he loved, he swore that he would participate in her sufferings and her dangers, and refused to quit the altars, at the feet of which he threw himself in despair. Appia could no longer attempt to leave him; but she constantly refused to be united to him, in hopes of one day overcoming his resolution. She lamented that Leon should thus quit the world, with all its prospects

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when she could no more contribute to his happiness. At length the danger which threatened them declared itself; they were both impeached by the persecutors of the faith, thrown into a dungeon, and condemned to torments. Nevertheless, the fate of this young victim interested even her tyrants. It was proposed to her to renounce her religion: a word would have saved her, and restored her to life, to happiness, and to Leon; but she looked forward only to her God, and demanded death.— In vain, in order to preserve Leon from torments, did she declare that he professed no proscribed religion; that she alone embraced its doctrines, observed its precepts, and adored its author. Leon wished to close his hateful existence; he even ventured to belie his thoughts, and swear that his opinions and those of Appia were the same.— The sentence is pronounced, the pile is lighted, the flame encircles them, and consumes the unhappy lovers, toge-

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ther with the holy minister who had been Appia's guide:—the one expires the victim of his love, the other of her faith.

This steadiness in her principles, and this equal balance between what pertained to her duties and to her lover, display at the same time in Appia the energetic power of the human mind, and that unbounded resignation of which a woman is capable when she is virtuous and empassioned.

Women know well how to make sacrifices; and they make of them a merit and a science. It seems as if the desire of living for others were necessary to their existence. Even without having experienced this disposition of theirs, we have a soft and secret presentiment of it; and we resort to them on the rapid calculations of the comforts we may derive from them. Sure of them in our pleasures, we desire them in our sufferings; and their reign may be said to recommence at the very moment which terminates our happiness.

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SAVAGES.

I HAVE not yet spoken of savages; but, in order to give my readers a faint idea of the state of women among these fierce hordes, I have thought that, on arriving at the æra of the destruction of Europe by the barbarians of the north, I might with propriety place before this wonderful revolution some account of them, which, from its nature, ought to be far removed from the description of civilized nations.

Among every polished people the women, by their sense, their charms, their address, and their coquetry, possess a thousand means of re-establishing between them and us the balance of power; but among savages, who, in their coarse reserve have no social idea, they remain without hope; their weakness is without support, and their existence, in relation to the men, only a long punishment.

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Travellers present us with some exceptions; but, in general, those of them who are worthy of credit agree, that the condition of women is here dreadful.

Shall I mention the horrid custom of the Hottentots? Among them the women bring up the male children almost as far as the age of puberty. The boys then quit their care, and their admission to the society of men is attended with much ceremony. The initiation being over, the young Hottentot embraces the first opportunity to return to his mother, and to beat her in the most cruel manner, in order to declare to her by this treatment, that he is no longer in her power. He boasts of his conduct with pride; and if the mother carry her complaints to the tribes, the savages unanimously applaud the energy of their young comrade, as an evident proof of his contempt for the women. Indeed, the condition of this sex is among many hordes of savages so

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wretched, that mothers have been driven to such a degree of despondency as to be rendered insensible to the daughter which she has reared with her own milk, by thinking of the evils for which she is destined.

Father Joseph Gumilla, a missionary, one day reproved this crime of insensibility to a young savage on the banks of the Oronoko. I subjoin the answer which she made to him.

"Would to God, father, my mother had stifled me when I was born; she would have saved me from many afflictions.

"Our husbands, in departing for the chase, take their bow and arrows, without encumbering themselves with us; we are obliged to follow them with one child at the breast, and another in our arms; at night they return without carrying any burden; whilst we, besides our children, must bear whatever it may please them to load us with. Although exhausted by fatigue, they do not, on

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our return, permit us to go to sleep or take the least repose. They oblige us, during the whole of the night, to pound maize in order to make chica. They get drunk, then knock us down, tear our hair, and tread us under their feet. What is our prospect after so much suffering? When we advance in years our husbands take a second wife who is younger, and encourage her to ill-treat us and our children.

"Do you believe, my father, that patience can bear this excess of tyranny, which has no end? and should we not manifest the greatest mark of tenderness for our daughters in stifling them at their birth?"

If savages are, for the greater part, the tyrants and the executioners of their wives, we may, nevertheless, be assured, that among some of them, by a very striking opposition, we may discover a kind of veneration for this sex. The Hurons, for instance, render their women slaves; but when they have be-

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come matrons they shew them every respect; they admit them to their councils; and they alone determine peace or war. When a matron, either to appease the manes of her murdered parents, or to make an exchange of prisoners, wishes to avail herself of the arms of a warrior but little known to her, she sends him a necklace of shells. The savage believes himself as irresistibly engaged by this trifle as our ancient knights did formerly by the liveries of their mistresses.

Among the Natchez it seems that the women even reign. As they worship the sun, they believe that their commander descends directly from this luminary, whilst her husband is only a simple mortal, whom she usually chuses from an obscure class, in order to enjoy her superiority more peaceably. If she die, her husband and all her attendants are obliged to follow her into the other world, that she may not want any thing when she arrives there.

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Of all the known nations of the world, it is only among them that this sacrifice is imposed for the wife; in India, on the contrary, it is established for the husband; but in general, in every country, if we except those women who are on some accounts privileged, the whole of the sex are slaves.

Is it not truly honourable to them, that even among nations so barbarous, they should have inspired some ideas of respect and esteem? The wandering savage loves the sex in general, without having any predilection for any one in particular that may present herself to his eyes. If he think of to-morrow, which is the first symptom of civilization, he becomes a shepherd; hence the rudiments of society are formed, and women may attempt to exercise their empire. It is in tranquillity and rest that these means of seduction are in force; and thus it becomes to an observer an interesting process to trace the power and the influence of women

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augmenting or diminishing according to the different degrees of civilization they may have attained.

They have no influence over men wandering in forests; they have every influence over them when they begin to build huts, though they only return to them at night.

A striking lesson for more than one unhappy woman among civilized nations. Indeed there are such husbands as may, from their conduct towards their wives, be justly compared to savages, and who resemble them from the absence of all affection, and of every sentiment; the abject state of minds that retain their ferocity. If then this woman wish to render her house agreeable, and to dissipate her melancholy; if she only wear a serene aspect; if her mouth utter only soft things without reproach, it must go well with her. A hardy and criminal man expects to be met with murmurs; he prepares himself beforehand to re-

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pel tears; to answer caprice by impatience, and ill nature by irony; but if he meet with no resistance, all the force which he had collected falls of itself.

The man of whom we speak, in such circumstances, begins to go out later in the morning, and to return sooner in the evening:—idleness is the most common foundation of our character; we soon acquire a greater fondness for the more soft and less troublesome pleasures; happiness finishes by outweighing pleasure; and thus, thanks to the virtues of a tender, skilful and wise woman, a barbarian is softened, and an inconstant rendered faithful.

Without considering farther the state of women among savages, it may be seen by what I have said of them, and by some notes subjoined to this work, that, among almost all of these barbarian hordes, they had uniformly but one revolving round of pains and afflictions; but yet they were not con-

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fined there as in Asia. They like to boast—a savage woman, too unhappy, too much persecuted, is able to fly into the woods, to apply the strength and the address which she has acquired to render herself less wretched, and escape from her tyrants;—but a woman imprisoned in a seraglio, tormented by her infamous guardians, who revenge themselves of their own misfortune by that of their victims, appears to me still more unfortunate, even in the midst of the luxury which surrounds her. The other wants every thing, but has at least her liberty.

I should doubtless merit just reproach were I to pass by the Amazons in silence. Their existence is, in the opinion of many people, purely fabulous; yet, as some writers are of a different opinion on this subject, I shall not pretend to pronounce between them; but, referring my readers to all that has been written concerning these brilliant heroines, shall content my-

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self, with quoting an account with which I am furnished by Herodotus.

ORIGIN OF THE SARMATIANS.

"AFTER the Greeks had fought against the Amazons, and had obtained a victory on the banks of the Thermodon, it is related that they carried away with them, in three vessels, all that they had been able to take prisoners. On the open sea they attacked their conquerors, and cut them in pieces; but, as they knew nothing respecting the working of a ship, and understood not the use either of the sails or of the helm, after they had killed the men, they gave themselves up to the conduct of the waves and the wind, and at length landed at Gemnes *, in the Mæotis Palus. The Amazons having

* Gemnes was in the country of the free Scythians.

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here descended from their vessels, marched into the interior of the inhabited countries, and possessing themselves of the first herd of horses which they met on their rout, mounted them, and pillaged the territories of the Scythians. People could not imagine what these, their new enemies, were, being unacquainted both with their language and their dress. They at first took them for men of the same age; and under this idea gave them battle; but after the action they discovered, by the dead which remained in their hands, that they were women. In a council held upon this occasion, they resolved not to kill any more of them, but to send the youngest among them in as great a number as they imagined there might be of the Amazons, with orders to form their camp near them, to do the same things as they should see the Amazons do; not fight even if they should attack them, but to take to flight, and to approach them

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again, and encamp near them when the pursuit should cease. The Scythians took this resolution because they wished to have children of these martial females. The young men followed their directions. The Amazons perceiving that they were not come to injure them suffered them to remain in quiet. In the mean time the two camps continued to approach nearer and nearer together. The young Scythians, like the Amazons, had with them only their arms and their horses, and lived, like them, by the chase and by the booty which chance threw in their way. About the hour that the sun is highest above the horizon the Amazons went out of their camp, some alone, and some in parties of two or more. The Scythians seeing this did the same. One of them drew near to an Amazon who was separated from the rest; and she, instead of resisting him, granted him her favours. As they could not speak to one another, because they did

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not understand each other's language, she desired him, by signs, to return on the morrow to the same place with one of his companions, and gave him to understand that she would bring with her one of her friends.

"On his return to the camp this young Scythian related what had befallen him, and the following day went again to the same spot; he there saw the Amazon with one of her companions. The other young men, instructed by this adventure, connected themselves with the remainder of the Amazons. The two camps were united; they lived together, and every one took for his wife her whom he had had for his mistress. The young Scythians did not understand the language of their wives, but the Amazons understood that of their husbands; and when they began to render themselves intelligible to one another, the Scythians spoke to them in these terms:

"We have parents, we have lands,

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and we have led another life; let us return to them, and we will never have any other wives than you. "We cannot," replied the Amazons, "live with the women of your country. Their customs do not in any thing resemble ours. We draw the bow, we dart the javelin, we mount on horseback. We have not learned the employments proper for our sex. Your countrywomen occupy themselves only with the employments of women. They do not quit their chariots, nor go to the chase; how then can we agree together? But if you would have us for your wives, and shew justice, go to your fathers, demand of them the share of their goods which belongs to you, return after you have received it, and we will live separate from them."

"The young Scythians, persuaded by their wives, did as they directed them: and rejoined them after they had collected the portion of their patrimony

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which belonged to them: then the Amazons thus addressed them:

"After you have bereaved your fathers, after the havoc which we made on arriving in your territories, we fear the consequences that may arise, if we remain in this country; and since you will indeed have us for your wives, let us all go, of one accord, and establish ourselves on the other side of the Tanais."

"To this the young Scythians agreed; and they passed the river. After having marched three days towards the east, and three days from the Mæotis Palus towards the north, they arrived in the country which they now inhabit, and there fixed themselves. Hence it comes to pass that the wives of the Sarmatians have preserved their ancient manners. They ride on horseback, and join in the chase, sometimes alone and sometimes with their husbands. They attend them likewise to

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war, and wear the same dress with them. The Sarmatians have used the Scythian language; but they have never spoken it with purity, as the Amazons understood it but imperfectly.

"With respect to their marriages, it was established, that no woman could be married who had not killed an enemy; and if there were any of them that could not fulfil the requirements of the law, they died at a great age without having been married.

"Such was the origin of the Sarmatians, a nation as fierce as it was martial."

THE IRRUPTIONS OF THE BARBARIANS.

I HAVE arrested the progress of my work in order to speak of the savages, and of the origin of the Sarmatians; I resume the gradual course of events from the last Roman emperors. We

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arrive here at the æra of a revolution the most unexpected, and perhaps the most singular of any in its effects on the condition of women; the irruptions of the barbarians of the north of Europe.

The Roman empire, having reached the last degree of corruption, resembled only those old monuments which yet recall ancient and beautiful forms, and which, reared upon a foundation secretly undermined, are supported on their base only by their bulk, but are ready to fall at the first shock. Suddenly the barbarians rushed forth from the shores of the Baltic and from the forests of the North. The Scandinavians, the Anglo-Saxons, the Britons, the Germans, descended like a torrent, and spread terror, pillage, and desolation wherever they bent their course. They overturned the Roman empire; and repeated, during four hundred years, their terrible invasions; to which a new civilization only could put a stop

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after five centuries of crimes and atrocities.

Who could believe that such savage men, drunk with blood and carnage, would have brought with them the first germ of that gallantry which so long prevailed in Europe, and of which there remains with us only the remembrance? To examine into its causes, we must enter into some historical details as fully as may be consistent with the plan of these essays.

Let us first of all revert to the time when the Franks established themselves in Gaul, the Lombards in Italy, and the Goths in Spain.

Almost all the northern barbarians were in very peculiar circumstances with respect to their women. The sex in general was treated with the severity common to the inhabitants of the forests; yet, by an inexplicable contradiction, they believed the women to be of a nature more nearly allied to the Deity; and thus their religious employ-

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ments were entrusted to them. In other respects they were much upon the same footing as in civilized countries. Among the Greeks the women pronounced the oracles; they were respected by the Romans in their sybils; and the Hebrews had their prophetesses. Without enumerating the different nations of the North, I shall content myself with selecting from among them, some one which, from some near resemblances, may give us an idea of all the rest.

The ancient Britons had female druids, who performed a part in their religious ceremonies, and participated in the honours, as well as in the emoluments, of the priesthood. When Suetonius landed on the isle of Anglesey, his soldiers were struck with terror on beholding the consecrated women, who ran from rank to rank with torches and dishevelled hair, and seemed, by their cries, to be invoking the vengeance of heaven on the invaders of their country.

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It is said that this body was divided into three classes. The first, bound by a vow to preserve their virginity, and united in a community, lived in great retirement. These had the highest pretensions to divination, to the gifts of prophecy, and to miracles; they were above all admired by the people, who consulted them as infallible oracles, and gave them the title of Senæ, or "Venerable Women." Mela gives a description of one of their convents on an island in the British Channel. They were of the mysterious number of nine, and could, among other wonders, raise tempests, and transform themselves into all manner of animals.

The second class was formed of married women, but who were altogether given up to religious employments: they seldom saw their husbands, "who, more free," says an author, "found themselves very happy in having such devout wives."

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The third class was devoted to servile employments.

We read in ancient chronicles that the Cimbri and Teutoni took with them, in their armies, the old prophetesses; who marched with bare feet, and carried over their dress a white veil fastened with clasps, and a girdle of gold. After an engagement, they ran before the prisoners with swords in their hands, dragged them to a scaffold, at the foot of which was a large vase of brass to receive their blood. During the battle these women beat, without intermission, upon stretched skins, before the chariots; and the combatants, animated by these sounds, pressed forwards, or slackened, according to circumstances.

In relation to religion and courage, we have seen that the Britons, the Celtes, and the Teutoni, allowed their women a rank very gratifying to their self-love, and which evinced the de-

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gree of confidence which they had in them.

A single feature will shew us the consideration which this sex had attained among the ancient Gauls.

The Gallic women were known at all times to equal their husbands in greatness of mind, and in courage; but before the Gauls passed into Italy, the torch of civil war was light up in the midst of them. When, assembled on an immense plain, they were going to commence their slaughter, the women threw themselves before their enraged husbands, separated them, and reconciled them. From this time they were always admitted into their councils; and this memorable event was consecrated to them as a memorial of veneration.

It is said, that in the treaty which they made with Hannibal it was stipulated, that if any disputes should again arise between the two countries,

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they should, on the side of Carthage, be referred to its commander; but on the side of Gaul, the women alone should decide them. Such was the respect in which the women were held by the nations of the North.

But of all these people, the Scandinavians were those who carried this tender enthusiasm for the sex to the highest degree; an enthusiasm, which has led many writers to consider the North as the cradle of our ancient chivalry.

If, in the South, Asiatic manners rendered the women wretched; if these people, by turns slaves and tyrants, had for them a sensual love, but little esteem; if they passed all at once from worshipping to despise them, from an idolatrous regard to the excess of an inhuman jealousy; in the North, on the contrary, the Scandinavians and the Celtes regarded the women as their equals and their companions, and even

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sought to merit their approbation by efforts of courage and generous atchievements. These are the nations who contributed most to spread throughout Europe that spirit of equity, of moderation, and of politeness, which forms the distinctive character of our manners.

We may, perhaps, assign one cause for this. Among the Scandinavians their fortunes were limited, and nearly equal; their manners were simple, and the passions only unfolded themselves late, and in unison with their reason. They were more restrained under a severe climate: and if we revert to the religion of the Celtes, we shall find that one of its most revered tenets was, that the Deity interfered even in the smallest things; and that every phenomenon which appeared was only a method whereby the Divine Spirit manifested his will. Thus visions, involuntary motions, sudden and unexpected desires, became the admonitions of heaven, and merited

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the respect of those who felt them, and served as the organ of the Deity.

The women, who, for the greater part, seem less influenced by reflection than by the instinct of nature, appeared to this people, as I have observed, to be better adapted than the men for filling this honourable ministry; and on this idea rested the principal base of their influence. They carried them along with them in their expeditions, followed their counsels, and sought in their esteem motives to brave every danger; and, in their ill success, they feared more their reproaches than the sword of the enemy.

We may perceive, with the most superficial glance, in this simple and hasty sketch of the esteem in which women were held by the men of these barbarous countries, all the first ideas of chivalry, which the nations of the North diffused when they inundated Europe. A taste for heroic adven-

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tures, and a desire of glory, had for a long while carried many Scandinavian warriors to penetrate into countries the most remote, in order to render their names illustrious. A constant habit of rapine continually exposed the weak to sudden attack; and superinduced the necessity of defenders. Every young warrior, eager of renown, took upon himself the noble charge of protecting the fair sex, and followed his taste in pursuing an adventurous career.

Our esteem and admiration of objects increase in proportion to what they have cost us. Thus, a knight, devoted to the service of beauty, after having sustained a thousand combats, and followed a thousand hazardous courses, respects her, and adores her more than ever; and feels himself highly blessed in obtaining from her a favourable look. We judge what elevation of thought pertains to equal alliances. The women,

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in their turn, acquired a certain arrogance, a more elevated opinion of their power. They enhanced themselves in their own estimation, and accustomed themselves to believe that they were as essential to the glory of the men, as they were necessary for their pleasures. Filled with prejudices concerning the true point of honour, they did not quit the sure way to please them, the path of valour and celebrity, and despised those who passed their youth in an obscure and effeminate indolence.

The multitudes of Scandinavians, which established themselves in France, Spain, England, and Italy, carried with them the taste of chivalry; and this passion, since restrained within very just limits, produced the refined politeness which has for so long a time formed a part of our manners *.

* If the reader wish for a more perfect idea of the nations of the North, he may peruse with

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This first impulse of chivalric gallantry among the nations of the north, was far from possessing all that delicacy and fascination which it afterwards acquired in Europe by the admixture of the tenderness of the Spaniards, the elegance of the French, and the splendid romanticity of the Moors. All the first notions were conceived without being developed; respect for the sex, love, devotion, the enthusiasm of glory, and a constancy which yielded every thing to one single object. These foundations were laid; but they were yet covered by a shade of coarseness and simplicity, which, even in the means of pleasing, announced a rude tenderness, and left more to be seen of the warrior than the lover.

Let us attend to the complaint of

advantage and interest, the ingenious and learned particulars collected together in "The Scandinavians, a Poem, by C. Montbron *."

* This work is, I believe, only in French.
TRANSLATOR.

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Harold, a young Dane, and we may form some idea of the means of seduction employed by these northern heroes. "Ah," said he, "I am master of eight different exercises:—I fight valiantly; I sit firm on horseback; I am accustomed to swim; I can run on skates; I understand the management of the lance; I am skilled in the art of rowing; and a Russian fair can nevertheless despise me!"

Harold the Valiant had, no doubt, many estimable qualities; but I doubt whether they would appear very captivating to our amiable females? From this young warrior's expressions of tenderness we may, however, ascertain the peculiar character of the first chivalry of the North, as well as of that of the rest of Europe, to which it gave birth. We shall speak of it in the course of this chapter.

If, in former times, when the nations of the North had hardly emerged from a state of barbarism, the men were ad-

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dicted to love and valour, the women were, on their side, virtuous and modest. The Anglo-Saxon women were more particularly remarkable for the propriety of their behaviour. An English author * asserts, that notions of modesty were among some of them so extravagant, that they refused to have commerce with their husbands, and chose to live in perpetual virginity; such was Etheldritha, the wife of Egfrid, king of Northumberland, who, although twice married, lived and died a virgin; engaging at the same time other females to follow her example. But, to the eternal honour of the Saxon women, we must cite the singular example of courage and chastity displayed by Ebba, abbess of Coddingham, and the nuns of that monastery.

The abbey of Coddingham being strongly besieged by the cruel Danes, this abbess took a knife, and with it

* Joseph Stoult, "Description of Manners."

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slit her nose, and cut off her lips, and by her discourse determined the other females, who were young and beautiful, to do the same. When they had thus disfigured themselves in the most frightful manner, they waited the arrival of their licentious conquerors, who, to avenge themselves of what had prevented them from gratifying the brutality of their passions, set fire to the abbey, and destroyed all these unfortunate women in the flames.

Such were the manners, the spirit, and the character of those nations, all of whom had nearly the same ideas and the same customs.

We may judge of the effects which must have been produced by the admixture of these conquerors, yet barbarous, with the people whom they subdued: strength, courage, and roughness on the one hand; and on the other, indolence, depravity, weakness, and polite, but degenerate, manners; a monstrous assemblage, from which

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disorder alone arose, and could have arisen.

But Christianity passed from the vanquished to their conquerors; occasioning seas of blood to flow on the one hand, whilst, on the other, by subduing hatred, it was made the first foundation of mutual reconciliation. We then behold united together the vices of the Romans and the haughtiness of the barbarians; and from the corruption of the one and the ferocity of the other arose insensibly a new system of manners. It is to this æra that I assign the commencement of chivalry, considered as an institution. But the women (always women!) contributed very materially to this great change. Conciliating by nature, by their fascinating manners and by inclination, and always ready to seize with address the exact period which might emancipate them from slavery, they availed themselves of the weakness of the vanquished and of the heroism of the vanquishers, and contrived

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a species of worship or love, honour and fidelity, and from a courage more refined than that of the first institution, which had suggested to them the idea of it. They cemented these powerful laws by all that religion held most sacred; and, uniting together all the virtues in this holy code, promised and awarded themselves as a recompence to those knights who, to merit them, were obliged to be at the same time loyal, religious, intrepid, virtuous and faithful.

But before we contemplate the spectacle which women, in this splendid æra of their history, present to us, let us examine the revolution produced by the religion of Mahomet, and in what manner his polity and his worship formed a perpetual slavery for this sex in so large a portion of the earth.

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THE CONDITION OF WOMEN IN ASIA.

RELIGION OF MAHOMET.

At nearly the same time as the union of the first chivalric notions with the laws of Christianity presented to the women in Europe the assurance of a total change in their situation, a religion arose in Asia which confirmed for ever the domestic slavery of a sex which, even in oppressing them, the Orientals adore.

Whilst religious and political revolutions have successively changed the condition, the character, and the manners of women, it is to be remarked that the inhabitants of the East have uniformly remained in the same state. It is in vain that their country has often changed its master; that it has been by turns subject to the arms and the laws of different usurpers: not one of these conquerors has ever thought of bursting the shackles of an unfortunate sex,

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or of abating in the least the rigour of its bondage.

If Mahomet did not, like Brahma, command the women to burn themselves on the funeral piles of their husbands; this prophet, whose policy was so profound, did not render them less the eternal victims of his ambition. Wishing to stifle all those passions which he thought sufficiently strong to counterbalance his influence on the mind, he felt that though he could restrain men from intoxication, by prohibiting, by his religion, the use of wine, he would in vain attempt to triumph over love; but knowing how he might skilfully oppose pleasure to it, he established the custom of shutting up the women; and shortly after, his laws opening, by a multiplicity of enjoyments, an unbounded field for all the desires, he left to beauty no longer any empire but over the passions; a power destitute of danger, a reign of very uncertain continuance, and the duration

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of which extends no farther than that of the transports of love.

The genius of women has not been able to oppose itself to the genius of Mahomet. In those parts of the globe where his religion has prevailed, their condition has remained stationary. In other countries, and even among barbarians, it has been meliorated; their accomplishments and attractions have raised them to a controuling power; but, as I have above observed, in Asia alone have they submitted to slavery without hopes of relief; and, in order to discover some faint traces of their character, we can now only cite some secret intrigues, by which they endeavour, in the retirements of the seraglios, to ameliorate their destiny.

Some ambitious sultanas have, it is true, acquired a momentary power; but the condition of the sex at large has not been benefitted by any circumstance of this kind.

We ought, at all times, to do justice

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to the Arabs. Before the establishment of the religion of Mahomet the women possessed among them privileges almost equal to those they enjoy in the most civilized countries of Europe. The Arab, open, generous, and mild by character, had in him every thing that ought to have led him to appreciate a sex which he afterwards only enslaved through a religious fanaticism. Mahomet proceeded but slowly in enslaving it in his countries. After his death many women ascended the throne of Persia and of Tartary; but the almost universal establishment of a religion, which directs that they should be considered only as slaves destined for the licentious caprice of their masters, destroyed, in less than one century, all the superstructure of their power, and reduced them to that degraded rank which they are now seen to hold among the Mahometans. This species of slavery, which depressed even their minds, is perhaps cemented by the indolence na-

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tural to these climates; that delicious indolence which the men so much cherish.

Nothing can be more opposite in these respects than the habits, the character, and the taste of the Indians and the Africans. Whilst an African, like a tiger, watches every occasion to pillage and to destroy, the inhabitant of the Indies, satisfied by a little rice and the simple productions of nature, lays himself down at the foot of a palm tree, not to brood over crime, but to rest there in peace. Such is the influence of so fine a climate. The magnificent spectacles which are exhibited on the shores of the Ganges, and on the plains of Hindoostan, surpass all description. During one part of the year the air is perfumed by odoriferous flowers; delicious fruits offer a refreshing and salutary nourishment; and trees with luxuriant foliage continually afford an impenetrable shade. Nature has left the inhabitants of these happy regions no-

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thing to seek but pleasure; and pleasure is almost the only object that occupies their attention. Their sweetest enjoyment is rest and inactivity. One of their authors has said, and the maxim is now become popular,—"It is better to sit than to walk, to sleep than to wake; but death is supreme felicity."

If the Indians give themselves up with delight to this voluptuous indolence, with what soft transports will it not inspire a sex yet more adapted for relishing all the shades and all the degrees of these exhilarating sensations? An Indian woman, naturally sensual, enervated by the perfumes of flowers, and yet more inflamed in her desires by the influence of climate, by those secret fires which at once spread through every part of her frame, passes her life in a perpetual delirium; the repose of pleasure is pleasure itself; and the soft supineness which succeeds the tender agitation of the passions, has for her a charm like to that of the wo-

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men of Ullahabad, luxuriously reclining in the midst of flowers, without the power of stretching forth their arms to save their children from being trodden by the horses in their rapid course.

Does a woman, thus voluptuous, ever consider whether she exist in slavery or freedom? Pleasure is alone her master, and to forget herself—her happiness. Such is the character, such are the propensities, of the Indians, known under the name of Hindoos.

The Mahometans have more activity and more violent passions; and ambition is sometimes found among them to counterbalance love. The women at Algiers, Tripoli, and Constantinople, generally less indolent than the Indians, are more industrious in the art of deceit, which loosens their chains and favours intrigue.

It has been long observed, that nothing inspires women so much as love with happy inventions, and that they excel us in expedients and artifices of

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every kind, whereby they deceive their tyrants. Those of whom I have just spoken, not having it in their power to write to their lovers, supplied this deficiency by an infinitude of other expedients, which communicated to the object of their affections the most secret thoughts of their hearts. The arrangement of a dish of fruit, or of a basket of flowers, served often to convey an appointment, and specify the hour of meeting. If they perceive a slave with an advantageous figure, they instruct him in the dispositions of their hearts by means of a bunch of flowers, which they place in a particular manner. The slave answers by employing the same language, and a correspondence is thus established without the aid of writing. They have, besides, colours which express hope, despair, desire, &c.; and the initial letters of the names of the flowers serve equally to compose an alphabet, and to form words and phrases, by changing successively and with won-

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derful rapidity the arrangement of their baskets. In so soft a language the rose was, doubtless, used as an emblem of homage, and the pansy *(pensée)* of consent. Thus, through the contrivances of beauty, those brilliant flowers, which Piron has with so much propriety denominated " The coquetries of Providence," served to express tenderness, to deceive tyranny, to prepare the delights of love, and delineate the path of happiness.

Every country must present us with the names of some distinguished women. Even in Asia, which seems to be the grave of the liberty of this sex, we observe Noork-Jehus, the favourite wife of Ichorgere, who acquired over him all the ascendancy of love and of tenderness, so rarely known in the interior of the haram. She attained to so high a degree of favour, that she distributed all the places in the state among her own family, and introduced such a taste for luxury and expence, that,

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according to the report of an historian, the court was wholly occupied by fêtes, the capital resounded day and night with sports and serenades, and the streets were constantly blazing with illuminations and artificial fire-works. The current coin bore the double impress of the emperor and his beloved consort. Her parents took rank immediately after the family of the monarch, and were admitted into the secret apartments of the seraglio.

It appears that, throughout Asia, those laws which oppress the women, leave in the recesses of the hearts of men a species of remorse. It manifests itself on those occasions when we see them shewing a respect to this sex very evidently in contradiction with their cruelty towards it. If the Grand Seignior deliver up a suspected man to the cord of the mutes, his treasures are seized, but his seraglio, and every thing pertaining to his women, is respected.

The women are, in India, so sacred,

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that in the midst of the fury of war, the soldier never extends his violence to them. Victory is arrested at the gate of the haram; and even the robbers, pledged to assassinate an Indian, pass respectfully by the apartments of the women. This strange mixture of homage and persecution, of respect and tyranny, displays the gross barbarity of this part of the earth.

Every country where the women hold not in society the rank to which they are called by nature, is farther from the state of civilization than even the savages themselves; who, if they do not respect their wives, suffer them, at least, to be at large.

It is surprising that Montesquieu should, in justification of the practice of the Mussulmans, assert that "in countries where the women are shut up the influence of the climate renders that of the passions so irresistible, that if they were allowed their liberty, every attempt

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directed against their chastity would be irresistible, and their opposition of none effect."

Would it not be more just to confine the aggressors? With every respect for Montesquieu which his name ought to inspire, I dare believe that this very seclusion emboldens them much more than either their climate, their desires, or their assaults.

Confine the women of Lapland, carefully separate them from the men, and you will soon see all the fire of love kindled in the midst of the ice of the north. The more the desires have to combat difficulties, the greater are the efforts which they make to overcome them; and tyranny, beyond all question, always operates in direct opposition to its own designs. The two sexes, removed from each other magnify to themselves the pleasures which they are capable of unitedly procuring. When the opportunities of enjoyment

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are more frequent and easy, it sinks in their estimation, and the temptations to it lose much of their violence.

Never can this truth be more deeply felt than it is at this time in France. I do not doubt but love continues there his empire; he will be found where grace exists more than elsewhere; but if it be true that he cherishes obstructions, loves secrecy, and adores modesty, what has he to do in our cities, where the young women, without any restraint to their conduct, or veil to their charms, hazard their weakness, and expose themselves to every attack? Always open to seduction, they omit no opportunities to seduce; and thus blunt the desires, which they soon deaden by thinking to satisfy them.

Amiable seasons of politeness, and of decency, which animated the sentiments of one sex! deference, respect, and the affectionate eagerness of the other, what is become of you?

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Can you be revived in a time so little suited to you?

A Chinese, who lived some time in England, has acknowledged that, during the first part of his residence in London, he had much difficulty to refrain from assaulting every woman with whom he found himself alone.

Our ancestors, whose principles were founded on reason and experience, left to their wives a liberty which was only restricted by the most salutary prejudice, and by a regard for their reputation; a restraint much stronger than all the subjection and all the chains, which their address so well knew how to turn to their advantage. Iron gratings were only known for the infancy of beauty, to preserve inexperience from the dangers which surrounded it; and, perhaps, the convents were, in this respect, the wisest institutions for young persons.

One cannot avoid regretting the demolition of these sacred retreats, where

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virtue rested in peace, where young females were preserved from snares, and their education promoted. If, in the interior of these convents, there existed abuses, could they not have been reformed without annihilating these respectable asylums? Where can a young widower, destitute of parents, now place his daughter, after his wife has been taken from him? Frequently his illness, his avocations, the necessity of separating, of tearing himself from those scenes which perpetuate his tears, may force him to a long absence:—Can he take with him in his excursions a young female, whose age and beauty design her for retirement until the time of her marriage? I would, certainly, wish to do justice to some other institutions, which have been established with a view of supplying the loss sustained in these convents; but they will not be able, with all the care of the teachers, to supply but in part, those revered habitations, to which the solemnity of re-

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ligion gave an imposing character, and which the public esteem rendered worthy of receiving timid innocence and distressed virtue.

CHIVALRY.

WHILST the gallantry of the north was making great progress in Europe, the slavery of women extended itself in Asia by the conquests of the Arabs.

Let us now quit Asia, leave its women without hope, and resigning themselves to their fate; and let us come to that period when their destiny presented a picture more attractive, by the establishment of chivalry among our ancestors.

If the Turks, disgusted with their former worship, and having no fixed notions on politics and religion, easily adopted the laws of Mahomet, we must admit that this instability of prin-

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ciple was as general in these times. The human race seemed everywhere plunged into a state of uncertainty and imbecility: in Europe, there existed in the minds of men an admixture of amorous, religious, and military ideas, which led them at the same time to undertakings the most opposite. A lover, by the same sentiment as bound him to his mistress, thought himself obliged to murder any one who should think of casting at her a single glance. The pilgrims, likewise, pillaged and destroyed in their travels, and arrived at Jerusalem laden with crimes; so much the more numerous in proportion as they felt a certainty of obtaining pardon. No asylum was sacred, no property secure; the right of the most powerful was everywhere exercised; and the women were more persecuted than courted. Nevertheless some ideas of reason and of justice were discoverable even in the midst of these disorders.

One is tired of a cruel anarchy where

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each seizes all or has nothing. This internal struggle of the desire of peace and order against licentiousness and a state of habitual warfare, resembles the dreadful convulsions of nature, which, tired of chaos and the dissonance of the elements, wished to separate them, and put each in its proper place.

Some indolent and martial nobles thought of associating together, to supply the weakness of the laws by the force of arms. Their design was, at first, only to protect the timid and the innocent, to combat the Moors in Spain, the Saracens in the East, the tyrants of the castles in Germany, and to secure, in France, the quiet of travellers. Such, according to several historians, was the noble institution of chivalry. I am far from contradicting this assertion; but all the splendour of this chivalric system had yet another cause, as I have observed above.

If we trace, with any degree of care, the progress of the female mind at this

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interesting period, we shall find that, without being able to perceive it, this sex, expert and domineering by character, formed at that time a dark, though perfectly innocent, conspiracy to secure to themselves a place in this new order of things which they had prepared.

Let us, for a moment, direct our eyes once more to the situation in which Europe then found itself, that we may inform ourselves of the plan which these women concerted, the hopes by which it was strengthened, and the means which they employed to carry it into execution. They felt that some change in the manners was necessary, that some species of institution was wanting which might, by the fascination of their persons, fortify the laws which they should establish, without following them.

What, then, were the men whom they had to seduce? On the one hand, a remainder of the descendants of those

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barbarians of the North who, hardly yet polished, had nevertheless brought with them from the depth of their forests a kind of religious veneration for the women; and, on the other, the brave, noble, and loyal knights who, within their turrets, as far removed from the corruption of Rome as from the elegant politeness for which they were destined, not knowing either how to read or write, fought, prayed to God, served their mistresses without gallantry, governed their vassals without justice, and followed the laws of honour more by instinct than by reflection.

So long as men lived in a state of ignorance and barbarism, they acknowledged no other attraction in the women than their beauty; but when they became more civilized, they wished to multiply their enjoyments; and the pleasures of sense no longer equalling their desires, they sought, in the possession of their company, another kind of delight more durable.

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This was what the women had calculated upon, or rather anticipated by a kind of instinct. Far from estranging men from those chivalric ideas, they attached them still closer to them; they animated their courage, but purified their designs; they enlightened and directed this secret predilection for fidelity, for honour, and for a new species of love which they kindled in their breasts; and, seizing this, to them decisive, occasion, fixed themselves in the thoughts of their lovers and their husbands, between heaven, the throne, and the altar.

It was not strange to behold the men so backward in conceiving new ideas, and the women, thus preceding them, when, in some measure, the one had become the disciple of the other.

Their interest soon spread their plans more promptly. And we may likewise discover in this the evidence of that

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system which discovers something supernatural in the women, which renders them susceptible of a degree of perfectibility more rapid than any of which we are capable. It must be granted to them that they have, almost at their birth, a physical and a moral sense which the men possess not. Look into savage nations, and you will find among their women this inclination towards civilization, all these first impulses of softness and sociability which, even under the warlike disguise of their manners, distinguishes at all times their sex from ours.

What does it now signify what might have been the object of the women in improving the primitive chivalry? Animating the minds of our honest ancestors they did good, and applied both their self-love, and their love, to the advancement of the manners which they had refined.

Every step in the progress of this

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new system, however slow, declares the delicacy of the minds which had produced it.

These agreeable errors of amorous enthusiasm, of sentimental extravagance, which, for short lived, and coarse enjoyments, substituted long years of care, devotion and constancy, might have been too feeble to have sustained themselves: they had the art to unite to these enchanting chimeras the principles of real honour, the necessary practice of virtues the most difficult, and, above all, the sacred doctrines of a religion full of mysteries, but founded on a pure and rigid morality, where all is love, sacrifice, duty, and privation. Tournaments were soon instituted; honour and love formed an alliance which was cemented by beauty. Courts of love were established; Troubadours appeared: the Germans, in conquering Europe, had greatly spread their bards; but these first singers were to the Troubadours what the first chivalric ideas

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of the North were to the true chivalry perfected by the women. Their successors enjoyed considerable esteem, and their wandering life was not passed without pleasure.

It is curious to observe these worthy and honest warriors, in the midst of their castles and their arms, at the moment that they are expecting a neighbour to attack them, receiving from their mistress lessons of politeness and gallantry. Troubadours, also, presenting themselves at the drawbridge, settling among them several successive days, and carrying away with them secretly the heart of their gentle lady, and leaving her in exchange the songs with which they had amused her.

In order to give some idea of their manners, I shall subjoin a story which I extract from an old book.

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IZAURE.

" COUNT HILDEBRAND had only one daughter, and her name was Izaure. He had been a widower for several years, and was possessed of a fief in North Britain, where he retained many vassals. He fought well, worshipped God, and loved a lady of the neighbourhood named Matilda; but he had much difficulty in elevating his amorous thoughts to the new system which had been for some time in esteem. Hildebrand was simply a warrior, almost ferocious in his manners, of a hasty, violent, amorous, and ardent temper, a common thinker, always filling himself with wild chimeras.

" It is proper to remark, that this Lady Matilda, whom he loved, was one of the greatest supporters of the reformed chivalry, and possessed one of

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those active minds proper for overturning the other; in a word, she appeared equally formed for establishing the power of her own sex, and for tormenting ours; she was handsome, accomplished, and vain; as high in thought as in descent, and more determined than any woman to raise her sex, and establish this fair code of honour and refined gallantry, which promised it a dominion so splendid.

"Count Hildebrand, in loving another, would have been less empassioned, perhaps, but more happy. Ever, at the feet of his mistress, the romantic hero disappeared, the pressing lover almost forgot himself. But Matilda, in one word, restored him to his place.

"A penitent, he received, instead of favours, a lesson in the alphabet; he already spelled tolerably well; heard a chapter on the duties of knights respecting God, honour, and the ladies; obtained, through submission, leave to

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kiss humbly the hand of the lady of his thoughts, and retired, having six leagues to return to his castle by night, on horseback, and along roads which could hardly be deemed such. Moreover, he had in the time to engage on his way in two or three combats, either against robbers, to protect a priest whom they had insulted, a maid whom they had attempted to dishonour; or, perhaps, to vindicate the sacred name of Matilda, which some rude man had pronounced without sufficient respect.

"Such was the life of Count Hildebrand. To say that he did not sometimes return to his castle a little out of humour with the severe laws of chivalry would be, I believe, to exaggerate the patience of this honest knight.

"When he did not return wounded, or, at least, harassed with fatigue (for they did not, particularly in those days, applaud a victory unless it had cost much) he ascended with dignity into the chamber of his daughter Izaure, to

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enquire if, during his absence, count Arthur, his neighbour and mortal enemy, had made any attempt; if his castle had not been attacked by him, his fields spoiled, his daughter's honour menaced; or, in one word, if any of those little events, sufficiently common at that time, had happened.

"When he was satisfied upon these particulars, he enquired of the matron Urgelle, placed with Izaure to watch over her education, if his daughter made any progress in the lessons which she gave her on the duties of the ladies, according to the new institution. For, if the good count sometimes murmured in Matilda's mansion against the extravagant system of the time, he enforced it with strictness in the presence of his daughter Izaure. These principles appeared to him to be a preservative for the honour of his daughter, and a security to her in his frequent absences, occasioned by his affairs and his love. Urgelle, with a learned and

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pedantic air, rendered Hildebrand a faithful account, and repeated to her pupil some maxims of honour and virtue. Izaure kissed respectfully the hand of her father; the count immediately quitted her, made the tour of his ramparts, placed his sentinels, made them rise the drawbridge, and, after a general prayer, which astonished the almoner, went to get a good nap on a very bad bed, resigning his soul to God, and his heart to Matilda.

"Urgelle had, no doubt, related all that had passed during the absence of the count, at least all that she knew;—but did Izaure conceal nothing? Before the reader be informed if she declared every thing, we must speak of her character; for this is just what we have forgotten.

"Izaure, at the age of eighteen, lovely as an angel, was as gentle as she was tender; and so ingenuous, that this quality would turn either for or against her, according to circumstances. Ur-

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gelle, pedantic and severe, knew every thing but the human heart. She had greatly inspired Izaure with fear, but not with confidence: Izaure now dreaded nothing, and risqued every thing. I have before observed that troubadours* existed at this time; and that, like the knights, they lived a wandering and vagrant life, with this small difference only, that the one sung, the other fought; that the one served the fair, and the other often secretly seduced them; and that, if the knights attacked and defended castles, the troubadours entered them, and made the inhabitants support them, protect them, and nourish them in illness; they went away with

* Perhaps, as the scene of this story appears to lie in Scotland, "troubadour" ought here, and in the following pages where it occurs, to be rendered "minstrel." The troubadours were a race of itinerant poets, similar to the ancient bards and minstrels of North Britain, who arose in Provence, and spread themselves over that part of France, in the 12th century. TRANSLATOR.

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considerable presents, with secret favours, whilst the knights departed with their hearts wounded, and their bodies covered with bruises, from which they with difficulty recovered. But now, relates the old book which I transcribe, a troubadour had come into the castle of Hildebrand; the count, according to custom, had received and lodged him, had heard, and, in some measure, attended to his songs; but Izaure had by chance retained them all. This is one of them, which she loved most:

SONG.

WHAT hopes and what torments the bosom must bear
When first unprepar'd the fond passion it knows:
Should we cherish the flame?—should we meet it with fear?
Desire will invite it, and reason oppose.

I feel it, alas! 'tis desire that prevails!
If I err, I would ne'er from such error depart;—
This reason, that learns of dull wisdom her tales,
Of the head is engender'd—desire of the heart.

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Reflection still traces the object we love,
In our slumbers, by dreams the kind task will fulfil;
We awaken;—reflection yet faithful will prove,
The cherish'd remembrance remains with us still!

"This last stanza ran continually in the mind of Izaure; it is true that the troubadour had pronounced it with an expression which impressed what it delineated. Who then is this troubadour?—We shall soon be acquainted with him. Let us at present content ourselves with knowing that his name was Isvan, that he was young, handsome, and well made; that he had long eye-lids, which, in singing, he elevated and depressed at pleasure. To all this he joined a touching voice, and a warm heart, concealed under an outward form the most delicate and timid; in one word, he possessed all the means of pleasing which have at all times been regarded as certain. Thus had he pleased Izaure.

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After a stay, which he had prolonged at the count's castle by feigning to be ill, he departed, and, carrying away with him the heart of the young fair one, left with her delightful recollections, tender phrases, and songs which she softly repeated night and day; particularly the following stanzas, which pleased her much.

SONG.

At Love's pains, gentle maid, never start;
This truth let thy bosom assure;—
Every wound that his hand can impart,
His hand can as easily cure.

Resistance his anger may move;
Then by pains and desires he destroys:
And were it not better to prove
Submissive his pains with his joys?

In spite of all pow'r you exert,
Your heart, at command, is his prey:
Then yield, and his anger avert;
His favour your trust may repay.

" For a long while the count and Urgelle thought no more of Isvan; but

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Izaure thought always of him; she could not help it, for the tender troubadour had taken good care that he should not be forgotten.

" He knew well that Urgelle's sight was very bad; lovers observe all things. He waited an opportunity of seeing the count go forth, and to see him pass; which he one day did. Then, disguised as an aged peasant, with a basket of fine fruit on his arm, and carrying a letter hidden in his bosom, he entered the castle in the absence of Hildebrand: every one passed him as if he had been known. Izaure recognized Isvan; Urgelle suspected nothing. Being of a very greedy disposition, she already devoured with her eyes the beautiful fruit which, from knowing her taste, he had purposely brought for her. She was not used to such a treat; for the most which the count had in his orchard were a few cherry trees. What a relish! delicious pears! Urgelle beheld nothing but the fruit; Izaure saw nothing but

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the letter. "Take—take!"—said the pretended peasant—the one took the beautiful pears, the other seized the tender billet. "What must you have, father?" said Urgelle. "What you please, good dame. These fruit came from my garden; they cost me nothing; and that is my basket."

"Some pieces of money were drawn from the purse of the governess, and a tender glance shot from beneath the eyelids of the timid Izaure. The old man departed with regret; but, while Urgelle opened a great chest, her fair pupil feigned to look towards the window, and occupied herself with nothing but the dear letter. This letter was read and re-perused thrice before the good dame, with her spectacles on her nose, had counted and finished recounting her pears, which she afterwards carefully secured. The business of this letter was no less than to solicit an interview! Who can judge of the emotions which agitated Izaure's head and heart?

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Her father and her governess could only repeat to her those rigid principles, according to which a female could not, till after the expiration of several years, permit any one to speak to her of love; and in fifteen days she was requested to meet Isvan!—On the other hand, nothing could be more ludicrous than to see the count lamenting in secret the virtuous resistance of Matilda; and, after leaving her, coming to his daughter to relate to her gravely the sermons he had received, which he would willingly have given to the devil, and which he explained, well or ill, to Izaure: for it is said that he spoke worse than he fought. What happened?—Izaure listened to her father, but thought only of Isvan. And yet the appointment alarmed her. Her lover had pointed out to her a mean of replying. She wished not to say no—she dared not say yes—she did not write at all. Several days passed;—Isvan grieved—his mistress suffered.—The tender trouba-

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dour wished once more to write—but how was he to do it? A stratagem once employed was no more worth any thing. After some time had elapsed, he walked round the castle, his head full of his design, his heart charged with anxiety, and carrying his letter in his hand, without seeing any mode of conveying it. Suddenly a great noise assailed his ears; he retires;—it arose from Hildebrand's fighting with some robbers, whom he overcame.—The vanquished fled with rapidity. Isvan advanced; he discovered that the count, in the confusion of his victory, had lost, and was seeking for, a letter which Matilda had written to Izaure, and in which, in a style more eloquent than the phrases of her father, she gave her lessons of modesty, resistance, and morality. We may almost tremble at the imprudence of Isvan. He was not ignorant that the count could not read: Matilda's letter, which he found under his feet, sufficiently resembled his own. He con-

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cealed it, and gave his own amorous note to Hildebrand. The count, delighted with having regained his letter, thanked him, recollected that he had before seen him, and invited him to pass some days more in the castle. The dissembling troubadour refused his offers, and departed in peace, very well satisfied with his adventure. The count reached his daughter's apartment, proud of the combat he had just sustained, and delighted to have a letter from Matilda, who had for this time suffered the good knight to let his painful eloquence rest.

"Take," said he to his daughter, as he gave her the troubadour's letter, unsuspecting of any plot,—"read it with attention; consider the principles contained in that letter, cherish the hand which wrote to thee; do all that it recommends to thee; it is thy father that commands thee." At these words he left her, and went to take off his armour. Izaure, when alone, opened Is-

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van's letter, trembled, and could not conceive how he could have chosen her father for his messenger. Never had the style of Isvan been so tender; never had he given her such good reasons for the interview of the evening; for this was the very night for which he had asked it; and the count himself, in giving her the letter, had said to her;—*read, cherish the hand which wrote to thee, and do all that it recommends to thee; it is thy father that commands thee.*" Mysterious affair! Without understanding any thing of all this, Izaure did not deceive herself. Another, by the power of address, would have failed in it: but Izaure was simple and ingenuous; she supposed that there was nothing of importance in it besides the interview.

" Shall she go, or not? Yes, she will go. She carefully concealed the letter, that she might not be questioned by her father; and if he should require her

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to read it, she might say she had lost it: all this was exactly performed.

"In the mean time the hour approached:—it was at nine in the evening—in those days a very unseasonable hour—that Izaure was to fasten a ladder of ropes to the battlements of the tower. Her heart beat short and quick, as she heard the great clock of the castle strike eight. The count had retired; Urgelle slept; and the almoner snored aloud: the sentinels walked about, but not in the quiet part which they had chosen. Two mastiffs barked in the interior, but they could not ascend the ramparts; and it was not necessary to pass them to go to Izaure's apartment. The moon was bright, the country tranquil:—the clock strikes nine.... Izaure, yet irresolute, was nevertheless already on the ramparts; she hesitates, lays the ladder—and takes it away again. Hildebrand's apartment was in the other wing of the castle; but still she thought

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she saw him, and that she was discovered: she cursed the planet which might betray her.

"At length, trembling with apprehension, she moved to retire, and leave Isvan to sigh in vain at the bottom of the tower. Suddenly the moon was covered by a cloud;—confidence began to revive in her heart: she returned on tiptoe, suspended the ladder from the turret, and ran away:—twice more she returned to assure herself that the knot was firm; and, scarcely able to breathe, reascended rapidly to her chamber. She left the door open, and placed opposite to it the uncertain light of a feeble lamp; then fell involuntarily on her knees, and lifted her eyes and hands to heaven.

"We may suppose that the happy troubadour was for a long while under the turret counting the minutes and seconds. It was thus that he sung with a soft and tender voice, as he addressed the night.

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SONG.

TO THE NIGHT.

GUIDE my love, thou gloomy Night,
From yon lofty tower away,
And thou'lt be to me more bright
Than the radiant beam of day!

Sing no longer, plaintive dove;
Envy's watch you may renew:
You should sure protect my love,
Simple, tender, soft as you.

Rivulet, thy murmuring cease,
Lest thy voice bid pleasure fly;
Mark me, uncertain yet of peace,
Stifling every rising sigh.

"In the mean time, the hour had sounded: he had lost all hope, when, by the assistance of a glimpse of light which yet pierced through the clouds, he saw the ladder descend——His heart beat with joy and ecstasy; and he blessed Izaure and love. He advanced towards the wall; but, alas! what was to be done? what part could he take? He had miscalculated the height of the ramparts; the ladder, too short, hung

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suspended at a height he could not reach. Judge of his despair, and ineffectual efforts! He sprung up in vain, and without power to reach the lowest step;—no tree at hand,—no crevices between the stones!—To complete his misfortunes, the cloud, one moment favourable, threatened a dreadful storm. The storm burst, and fell upon the castle in a deluge of rain; the lightning furrowed the heavens, and the loud thunder rumbled and resounded from afar.—Thus embarrassed then, we shall leave Isvan; and Izaure at her devotions. Let us follow the movements of the count. Awaked by the noise of the thunder, and being an active and prudent warrior, he feared that the count Baudouin, his neighbour and mortal enemy, would embrace this time to surprise him; he feared that the sentinels, beaten by the storm, were not at their posts, and no longer watched over his security.—He arose, armed himself, and marched with soft steps

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to make his rounds. Alas! he began just at the place where the few soldiers that he had did not allow him to put a sentinel, and which struck him as being most exposed. A flash of lightning blazed, and he saw the ladder.—He was on the eve of calling to arms, when the form of the ladder and its weakness struck him as more like the artifice of a lover than the boldness of a warrior. He placed himself in a recess, and waited in silence. He was soon convinced of what he apprehended. Nothing is impossible with love. Isvan, in spite of the storm, had in a few minutes collected a number of large stones, and heaped them one on the other; and, favoured by this very uncertain help, had by this time reached the ladder.

" Let us view, on the one hand, this lover, so tender, and burning with impatience, suspended in the air on this feeble cord, which the wind drove from the wall, and waved to and fro without

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ceasing.—On the other, Hildebrand, shivering with rage, with a spear in his hand, waiting on the ramparts to destroy him.—

"The trembling Izaure felt her knees bending beneath her, and they now lent her but a feeble support. The fury of the wind, of the storm, and of the thunder, redoubled her fears. Isvan, swifter than the lightning which he braved, arrived so near the battlements as to be able to spring to the ramparts. Hildebrand, whom he had not seen, was going to strike him; but a secret emotion arrested the arm of the enraged father.—He followed Isvan as far as the door of Izaure's apartment, where he stopped. It was then that Hildebrand arose like a terrible and vindictive God. Izaure was deceived unknowingly. Isvan would not use the sword which he concealed under his troubadour's dress; but, instead of defending himself, fell down at the feet of the father of her whom he loved.

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Nothing, however, could calm the fury of Hildebrand.—At this instant, fearful cries resounded through the vaults of the castle,—the bell rung,—and the guard was up.—"To arms!"—was vociferated through every part—"the castle is attacked!"—The count rushed to the ramparts, and Isvan followed him. Each was at the head of a party of soldiers. The combat commenced, and became terrible. Isvan, continually near the count, wrought prodigies of valour, and twice saved his life. The darkness of the night, increased by the storm, did not allow them to see the enemy against whom they fought.—At length, after two hours of carnage, Isvan made a fortunate sortie, cut off the enemy's retreat, and decided the victory. The assailants fled in confusion;—the young lover pursued them, and soon returned in triumph:—But what was his affliction and surprise, to discover, on his arrival, in the chief of the enemies who came to

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surrender themselves—the count Baudouin, his father—against whom he had himself fought! In the darkness he had not recognised his standard.

"Isvan, then, was the only son of count Baudouin. He did not partake of his father's hatred against Hildebrand; he had not, nevertheless, entertained the faintest hope of being united to Izaure from the time he had first seen her at a tournament. It was to surmount, if possible, all obstacles that he had left his father, and that, disguised as a troubadour, he had introduced himself into Hildebrand's castle. It would be vain to attempt a description of what passed in the hearts of these three warriors when they recognised each other. Baudouin, vanquished and a prisoner; Hildebrand a conqueror, but such through the arm of the very man who had dishonoured his daughter; Isvan at the feet of his father, ashamed of his victory, and not daring to lift his eyes to one or the other

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of them.—At this juncture the amiable and interesting Izaure came to them, and by her tears closed this affecting scene. Hildebrand embraced Baudouin, and gave him his liberty; the marriage of Isvan and Izaure was agreed upon by the two fathers; and sealed for ever by the treaty which united them.

"The storm dissipated, the dawn appeared, and introduced a serene day to brighten the happiness of the two lovers. The almoner, with the usual pomp, united them in Hildebrand's chapel.

"Urgelle, surprised that so many events should have happened without her suspecting them, said she would not, henceforth, answer for the most ingenious.

"The count solicited Matilda to honour this illustrious marriage with her presence. She came, and found that this tender romance had marched too rapidly for the principles which she was endeavouring to introduce; but agreed, nevertheless, with Hildebrand, that the

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circumstances were imperious. The vassals came to do homage to the new bridegroom; they danced at night, supped, and retired to rest. The chamber of the young couple being near to that of Hildebrand, he said, in thinking of the happiness of his daughter, that he much wished Matilda would finish, and deign to change the system, and consent at length to count his cares by days, and not by years."

THE MOORS.

THE more we read the more we may observe, in comparing the different æras, that the women, in order to burst their bonds, have commonly conspired without a necessity of understanding one another, and, in a favourable moment, marched towards the same end, by a secret agreement of which their inte-

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rests alone apprized them. It is neither good nor evil that I aim to assert of them, it is the simple truth. I am far from believing that in the following plan, which led them to fly from slavery, and made them desire domination, they were always conducted by a commendable design; but they have nevertheless discovered an energy, and above all a method in it, which seems contrary to their nature. We must, in other respects do them justice: either through mildness or weakness they have not, amidst all the extravagant and cruel ideas which have governed mankind, associated themselves to the cruelties which have desolated the earth. Some particular ones were, it is true, monsters; we cannot recollect, without horror, Fredegonde, Brunehaut, and some others, who have laden themselves with disgrace; but the women have never united to support any system of atrocity. The reign of terror was, in France, the production of the

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men alone. The women were only its victims. Robespierre found among them neither a mistress nor a friend; and it is to the courageous arm of a woman * that France owes the happiness of being delivered from the horrible monster Marat.—The women in Asia, victims sacrificed by the laws of Mahomet, warned by a kind of instinct of the danger which threatened them, had it in their power to stab the prophet, and suffered him to live. Thus, then, for three centuries, the whole sex appeared and acted. First of all to support the mild and pure morality of Jesus Christ; afterwards to dictate a code full of the honour of chivalry; and lastly, to favour the revival of letters in Europe. Before this last period, when their genius and their understanding secured to them, in Italy, a merited reputation, they enjoyed in Spain a do-

* Charlotte Corday.

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minion too splendid to be passed over in silence. Their influence among the Moors is one of the most remarkable circumstances in the history of women. Perhaps they never exercised their mild power in a more brilliant manner than at Granada. They there fully proved that they could reign over us without obliging us to forget our duties, and that they knew how to inspire heroism even in the bosom of voluptuousness.

After the invasion of Europe, by the barbarians of the North, the Moors, subjects of the Carthagenians, the Romans, and the Greeks, and afterwards subdued by the Arabs, who introduced among them the religion of Mahomet, *islamism* *, and the love of glory, took

* It is difficult to say what is the precise meaning of this term, particularly as used here. Islâm was understood by the Mohammedans to have been the true religion professed in the first ages of the world, as far down, according to some, as the deluge; but, according to others, not after the murder of Abel. TRANSLATOR.

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possession of Spain under the Calif Valid * the first. He sent from Egypt Moussa † Ben Nazir, an expert and valiant general; who, aided by Tarik ‡, defeated Roderic, in the year 712, took Toledo, and completed, in a short time, the conquest of Spain.

It is not known whether the Spaniards derived their gallantry from the Moors, or whether they imparted it to the latter.

However this be, the agreeable politeness of the Moors of Granada, and their chivalric manners, were celebrated, and are still. "Almost at the same time," says Florian, "a Moor cut off heads, which he fixed in triumph to his saddle, wrote polite and amorous letters to his mistress, lavished for her his treasures and his life; and, covered with the sweat and blood of the combat, gave entertainments at which shone

* Sometimes written Ulid or Ulit.

† Or Mouza. ‡ Or Tarif.

TRANSLATOR.

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his taste, and the magnificence and the splendour of love."

If among the Moors the women were by the laws almost slaves, they afterwards became divinities among that people, at once despotic, gallant, and empassioned. We may, as an example, mention the Emperor Aberame, who was all his life in love with a slave named Echeva. He founded a city for her two miles from Cordova, gave it the name of his mistress, and wished likewise that the statue of this beautiful slave should be placed over the principal gate of this city, consecrated to love.

We are not able to give a portrait of her; but she was, doubtless, very handsome.

The following is a description of the Moorish women, given us by an Arabian historian, who lived at Granada. It is he that speaks.—"The Moorish women are all beautiful; but this beauty, which at first strikes, receives

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afterwards its principal charm from their grace and their gentleness. Their size is rather above the middling, and no where are they seen better shaped and more slender. Their long black hair reaches down to the ground; their teeth, as white as alabaster, ornament a vermilion mouth which always smiles with a bewitching air. The great use which they make of the most exquisite perfumes gives to their skin a freshness, and a brightness, which does not belong to the other Mussulmans. Their walk, their dance, all their movements have a graceful softness, a voluptuous negligence, which yet surpasses all their charms. Their conversation is lively and keen, their wit refined and acute, and continually displays itself in sallies and happy expressions."

In this country every thing seemed to breathe pleasure and love. The Moors, always in quest of delightful sensations, and yielding every thing to

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their ruling passion, assembled together in the autumn in delightful country houses, where they passed the days and the nights in sports, in music and dancing. What happy means of facination! What opportunities of pleasing for the women! It is proper to observe here the character of this nation which they governed, and which was held by three different people.

The Moors regarded chastity with little esteem: the orientals in general are not very sensible to modesty. More amorous than affectionate, more jealous than delicate, and tyrants in their desires, they knew not how to delay or conceal either the pleasures which they purchased or those which they stole. The Spaniards, on the contrary, carried at that time, even in their sentiments, a romantic pomp, a tender gravity which the heat of the climate often enflamed, but which their amorous character continually moderated.

The spirit of independence, the an-

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cient Arabian haughtiness, is also observable in the nations conquered by them.

From these three characters there arose one which the women, with their usual acuteness knew how to estimate, and of which they availed themselves to subject to the laws of chivalry those men whom the tenderness of the Spaniards, the elegance of the Moors, and the stateliness of the Arabs rendered valiant knights and faithful lovers.

I shall restrain myself from entering into too tedious and minute a detail respecting the Moors. I should be insulting the ashes of Florian, were I not to refer my readers to his elegant work on the siege of Granada. Can I flatter myself with being able to give a more perfect idea of the manners of this people, than has been done by that amiable writer, whom the muses ought long to mourn? But the portrait of Queen Isabella, who, herself, attacked

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and took this famous city belongs in some measure to my work. I shall borrow it from " Gonzalvo de Cordova."

" Isabella was small, but well made ; her hair flaxen, and her eyes black and full of fire ; her complexion rather dark and swarthy ; but it did not prevent her from having a very engaging and agreeable countenance. Her character was noble, courageous, brave, and heroic. Endowed with resolution equal to any undertaking she knew how to pursue an enterprise, and above all to achieve it."

Such, in so many qualities, was this illustrious queen. Ferdinand, her husband, attacked Granada the ninth of May, 1491 ; and Isabella took it January the second, 1492. The siege continued nine months ; and the end of it terminated the empire of the Moors in Spain, which had lasted 782 years from the conquest of Moussa and Tarik. Nothing, I imagine, can better display

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the means and the resources which women are able to command than the conduct of Isabella, during the siege of Granada.

This female genius, knowing the spirit of the Moors, considered that it would be necessary for her in this siege to unite to the force of arms, all the splendour of luxury, and all the charms of gallantry; to strike this fickle people by heroic deeds, and to tempt them to surrender by exhibiting to them at once the elegant forms which might seduce them, and a gay and martial dress calculated to fascinate. Thus, by a striking contrast, dances were used as relaxations from assaults, and tournaments, from combats. The Moors, nevertheless, maintained a very obstinate and vigorous resistance. At length, the Spanish tents having been set on fire, Isabella, always ingenious in her political calculations, designed to build a town on the site of her camp, in order

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to prove to the Mussulmans that the siege should never be raised.

Florian says nothing as to the secret cause of the fire which destroyed Isabella's tents. I have discovered it, and will lay it before my readers.

ALMANZA.

A MOORISH TALE.

"THE beautiful Almanza, the daughter of Abdaral, the chief of the Moors, and the descendant of an Arabian family, was in love with Pedro, a young Spaniard, and one of Isabella's subjects. Before the siege of Granada, Pedro found means to see, secretly, his dear Almanza, either by a private appointment, or else in the very city itself, into which he had introduced himself in disguise. At length the siege was determined upon; and to com-

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plete his unhappiness, Pedro, then serving in the army of Ferdinand and Isabella, found himself reduced to the deplorable alternative of either forsaking his duty, or proceeding to attack the city which contained what in the world was most dear to him.

"Don Alphonso, the father of Pedro, was the most mortal enemy of the Moors, and especially of Almanza's father; who again, on his part, abhorred the Spaniards, and detested Alphonso; and would much sooner have beheld his daughter perish, than unite her to Pedro. It is difficult to find two lovers more to be commiserated. Hope, the only support of the unfortunate, was unable to dart the feeblest ray into their minds:—they considered their misery as at its full. Nevertheless, at the time the siege of Granada was preparing, their calamities surpassed even their fears.

"The tender and courageous Almanza having privately received a let-

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ter from Pedro, answered him by the same conveyance.

ALMANZA TO PEDRO.

Granada.

'No, my dear Pedro, do not follow the despair which guides thee. Happiness has fled, but honour remains with us. What does it signify if thy duties and mine are placed by fortune in opposite interests? it does not thence follow that the same good should not still appertain to us both. Behold those majestic trees which the raging winds wave on the mountains which surround us; see how they brave their fury. The hurricane may shatter them and tear them from their roots; but nothing can remove them from their places:—thus nothing can destroy in us either our principles or our thoughts. Our existence, our liberty, all these frail possessions belong to circumstances and to men. The dignity of our character, the ele-

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vation of our thoughts, belong only to ourselves. I hate the Spaniards, but I adore my dear Pedro;—thou oughtest to detest the Moors, and to love for ever thy Almanza:—but, faithful to our country and to our cause, let us not, on account of our love, take one single step for which our delicacy might reproach us. The pebble which I press under my feet, and from which the shoes of our horses strike sparks of fire without being able to injure it, is not harder than the inflexible soul of Abdaral, my father.

'He has seen my grief. I, the daughter of the Arabs of the desert, I confess it to thee, blushing, I shed some tears in his presence; my eyes had not the power to withhold them. Alas! his remained dry! They sparkled with rage when thy name escaped from my mouth. Surely, thou canst not doubt it, this harsh indifference has wounded my sensibility; but a secret admiration binds me to silence. Follow my ex-

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ample. Without forgetting love, yield to thy duty, which commands thee to sacrifice me. Do not quit the standard of Isabella. She marches against me; be faithful to her banners. Avoid, respect my father, in the engagement, but fulfil thy fatal destiny. I would rather see thee a conqueror within our walls, or behold thee fall at the feet of our smoking ramparts, than basely abandoning thy cause. Thou art only wretched, be not contemptible. I know that there is seldom patience without relief, or courage without hope; but the triumphs of virtue belong to such minds as ours. Thy letter partakes too much of the weakness inseparable from thy sufferings. More lamentations, Pedro;—they are ineffectual, and almost disgraceful. What do we expect, what do we hope from these fruitless murmurs? Is not the sand of the desert swept away by the whirlwind which rises it? Is it for us, weak atoms, to wish that events should be under our

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controul? Let us yield to our fate, and fulfil our destiny. Thy Almanza knows not the weakness and the voluptuous effeminacy of the Moorish women. Women without dignity, mistresses without elevation, learned in pride, but ignorant of glory, luxury and amusements have destroyed in them the primeval character of their nation.

'Our ancestors, the Arabs, conquered the Moors; and I tremble lest the Spaniards, who appear to be rousing themselves from a long slumber, should come, in their turn, to drive them from Granada, and render back to them the sword which they have so long borne. Few among us have preserved that energy, that ancient dignity, which ennobles the mind and conducts to generous actions.

'Do not believe, my dear Pedro, that thy Almanza loves thee less by holding out to thee such language. My love for thee is strong and pure as the virtue which supports me. What,

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then, is this new method of loving, this frivolous tenderness which fills my companions? Is that love? Is that the great, the immutable sentiment? It is only chivalric gallantry, which has neither the negligence nor the ardour of the burning passions of our climate. Yes, the lovers at Granada are now only genteel shepherds, the heroes and warriors of tapestry, who, covered with ribands, and figures, and devices, seem with pain to wish to mimic love near their mistresses as they do illustrious combats in their tilts and tournaments. It is not thus, Pedro, that men must be taught to conquer; it is not thus that they must learn to love.

'While I ask of thee, while I request thee, to sacrifice love to thy duty, I am willing that thy thoughts should incline to thy Almanza, unable, even in her enthusiasm, to reach the idea of the sacrifice which she is capable of making for thee. Farewell! thou, my life, my happiness, and my only

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thought! Our destinies are written, nothing can change them. More hope, dear Pedro; submission, courage, fidelity, glory, and death! these are what remain for us!'

"It may be seen, by this letter, what was the elevation of Almanza's character. Pedro knew her too well to hope to overcome her resolution. He obeyed, and marched under the walls of Granada. It was in the middle of the night, and in his tent, where, devoured by melancholy, and given up to ineffectual despair, he replied in the following words to his dear and too cruel Almanza.

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'PEDRO TO ALMANZA.

'Isabella's Camp, under the Walls of Granada.

'BE content, thou most beautiful, and most cruel of women! Thy voice has made itself understood. Pedro has obeyed, and is now under the walls which thou inhabitest. Thy lover has himself whetted those murderous swords which are going, perhaps, to spill the blood of thy father. This dark night I place before thy ramparts the terrible cannons which are going to break down for me firm walls, and to open a passage, even to thee, for the fury of our Spaniards, drunk with blood and with carnage. It is at their head that I, in the obscurity of the night, shall, without knowing it, guide their ferocious battalions even to thy peaceful dwelling! — Alas! Almanza, art thou satisfied with this picture? Is it

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enough that thou appeal to thy fortitude, which is only a criminal and cruel insensibility?—Fatal extravagance of an exalted mind, through the love of its duty! Behold, then, to what thou hast led us!—Misfortune presses upon us, circumstances draw us to one another.—All may be repaired. I will quit an army which I detest; and do thou fly those walls which ought to be odious to thee because they separate us. United by the most sacred bonds, we will thus escape from our tyrants. Ah! who will be able to detain us! What have we to do with the quarrels of Isabella and the Moors? What am I in her army? A humble officer, hardly known in the number of the subalterns, ought I to abandon my happiness to these political disputes?

'Thou art, it is true, the daughter of the chief of a nation; but, lost in the crowd of thy companions, oughtest thou to sacrifice every thing to this sanguinary struggle?

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'This night, even this very night, by the secret means which favours our correspondence, thou mightest be given to me; and I should be in thy arms. This luminary of night, which only enlightens my rage, shall guide our wandering footsteps, and become to us the torch of love.—Go—thou never lovedst me! I was never dear to thee! Thou sayest well that thou descendedst from those Arabs of the desert. They have left thee all the savage harshness of their manners! Boast well of thy courage; and be proud of thy insensibility. Every scheme which thou formest, every word which thou utterest, draws from me tears of blood. Lacerate a hundred times the deep wound in my heart.—But tremble! Thou knowest not the project which brings me under these walls. When, in the frenzy of my despair, my hand shall announce to thee that I obey thee, that I am come to carry fire and sword even to thy walls, thou wilt not believe it; thou

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canst not believe it.—Thou knowest that there are supernatural efforts above the power of man.—Tremble, I tell thee! I no longer hear any but the counsels of madness. Know that I detest, that I abhor, the dreadful order which thou hast given me. Far from whetting the sword with which I am armed I bend it, I bruise it; and, in my rage, I am ready to tear the banner committed to my charge, and to which thou wouldst have me be faithful.—Faithful! I am so only to despair.—Almanza! the delight and the torment of my life! thou shalt know of what the heart is capable when there remains for it neither existence nor hope.'

" This letter reached Almanza, and carried with it trouble to her mind.—She was courageous: but in proportion as we possess strength to struggle with a known calamity, is that strength weakened when we are ignorant of what we fear. Courage exhausts itself

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in uncertainty; the combat alone can sustain it. Not knowing to what to oppose itself, it droops; and the torment of the thoughts is the most cruel of all.

" Happily for the honour of her sex, Almanza was at this time only tender; and, obliging the rigour of her principles to give way to the distress of her lover, she wrote to him again, in order to draw from him his secret, and make him abandon designs which could not but be of a mischievous complexion. But, alas! the slave, who carried Almanza's letter, was discovered and massacred. This faithful messenger, perceiving that he was lost, threw Almanza's letter into the tide. The waves buried this tender mystery, and the slave perished with the secret of his mistress. The siege, in the mean time, went on.

" Pedro, receiving no more news from Almanza, and tenderly exasperated at this culpable indifference, about which he thought so much, that he exagge-

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rated to himself the severity of the principles of his mistress, determined more resolutely to execute the designs which he had formed. He continually walked round the walls of the city; he drew near to the fortifications without reflecting on the dangers which threatened him. His object was to enter the town; to find the convenient opening known only to the slave, whom he saw no more. Having lost all hope, he determined at length to force the passage; preferring, should he fail, the fetters which awaited him in Granada, to liberty in Isabella's camp. He contemplated, with a secret satisfaction, the prospect of passing the remainder of a burdensome existence in the dungeons of his enemies, provided he could but get near to his Almanza. The opportunities which he sought offered themselves to him sufficiently frequent. Every day some parties of Moors made sorties, and came suddenly to sweep away from the plains cattle and provi-

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sions. Pedro, only a subordinate officer, giving no orders, could not command an attack; but he prevailed upon some brave young men to undertake with him a daring enterprise, in order to acquire glory, and merit the favour of Isabella. He had not much trouble to inflame the courage of these young Spanish warriors. A body of Moorish horse issued out of the city; Pedro saw them, and apprised his companions of the circumstance. These daring young men, consisting only of fifty, mounted on horseback. Without any apprehensions on account of the smallness of their numbers, they fell upon the Moors with the rapidity of lightning, and, at first, threw them into confusion; but they soon recovered from their surprise, and rallied themselves. The engagement commenced. The day in the mean time declining, the Moors feared they might not be able to make good their retreat, and thought it prudent to regain the city.—

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Pedro, fighting in the first rank of the assailants, animated his companions by his impetuosity; his aim, however, was to put the Moors to flight, not to destroy them. In every horseman whom he attacked he respected the colours, and the remembrance of Almanza. Without striking a blow, those who wished to overcome him hardly appeared before him. He considered it as a crime to spill blood consecrated to defend the cause of the object of his love.

Notwithstanding their superior numbers, those who were retiring had continually the disadvantage against such bold assailants. The day having closed, the retreat of the Moors became very rapid. They went in disorder towards the gate of the city—this was the moment which Pedro had desired. He pressed the sides of his courser, and soon overtook the last company of the enemy; and, in spite of the efforts of the Moors, and the cries of his own soldiers, who, unable to follow him,

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ineffectually called after him, he entered Granada with the besieged. The Spaniards, carrying with them some prisoners, returned to their camp in triumph, lamenting and regretting Pedro, whom they considered as the victim of his imprudent valour. But he, mournfully happy at finding himself at length within the same walls as Almanza, delivered up his sword to the first officer that presented himself, and quietly offered his hands to the fetters of his enemies. He appeared rather to demand his chains than to shun them. The Moors conducted him to prison in a silence mingled with respect, astonishment, and admiration. The torches were lighted. The rumour of the engagement had spread itself throughout the city; every one spoke of the young prisoner who had displayed so much coolness and intrepidity, and wished to see him. The streets are crowded, and the windows thrown open.—By chance Pedro pass-

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ed before the house of Almanza. What was the situation of this unfortunate maid when, casting a casual look towards the spot where the multitude and the noise every minute increased, she recognised, by the light of the torches, her lover in chains!—Without having the command of her first emotions she uttered a shriek which penetrated to the centre of Pedro's heart. He raised his eyes, and, meeting the mournful looks of Almanza, he fell motionless into the arms of those who were conducting him to the tower.—Is it possible to describe the despair of Almanza, her doubts, her struggles, all her resolutions, formed and abandoned in the same instant? What has she not to fear? Abdaral, her father, united to his hatred of the Spaniards, all the ferocity of an inflexible character. Without being convinced of the attachment of his daughter for Pedro, he was not without his suspicions of it; of this she had been apprised, and the dreadful

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silence of her father could not but augment her tears. Fortunately, Pedro was but little known in the city. Abdaral had never seen him. But, at length, this fierce and barbarous Moor commanded him to the tower, and it was to this horrid prison they dragged the lover of Almanza! One word might discover him; the least imprudence might ruin him. Almanza had none of those common passions, which, in great calamities, leave the heart only tears, or an ineffectual discouragement. Deeply struck with the horror of her situation, she calculated upon nothing but its aggravation; but her unwearied energy left her yet power enough to contrive means to snatch her lover from the dangers which threatened him. The tenderness of her heart soon overpowered her prudence. Nothing could stop her: she covered herself with a veil, took a dress which disguised her still more, went out by a private door, and repaired to the tower

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with a purse of gold. She bribed one sentinel, and arrived at the door of Pedro's dungeon.—This door opens—she went to see him—she went to enjoy the mournful satisfaction of being near him!—Suddenly she heard a loud noise—she retires.—It is Abdaral, it is her father himself, who advances with rapid steps!—What is she to do? she cannot get away;—he must necessarily pass her by!—Almanza's heart trembled—but her prudence did not forsake her. She let down her veil, and leaned against the wall in the posture of one who was weeping over the fate of some prisoner that interested her.—Fortunately the dark passage was only lighted by a feeble lamp.—Abdaral, full of the purpose which had led him there, passed by his daughter without recognising her, and proceeded towards the door of Pedro's prison which opened to his order. Struck with her danger, we may perhaps imagine that

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she profited by this circumstance to fly from so threatening a situation; but this would be but imperfectly to know the heart and the courage of Almanza. More deeply occupied with the danger of Pedro than her own, she endeavoured to conjecture, and to collect from the words of her father, and the least orders he would give, what could at this hour have brought him to the prison. Already she is close to the door which separates her from her Pedro; soon, with her body bent, her ears closely pressed against the bars, she heard, she understood the following distressing and rapid dialogue. "Who art thou, wretched Spaniard?"—"What does it signify to thee?—who art thou?"—"The governor of this fortress, he on whom thy life depends, and who will drag thee from it if his suspicions be confirmed."—"I neither fear thee, nor death."—"If thou shouldst be the infamous Pedro!"—"I

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should be pitied, and esteemed wretched;—I should desire an end to my torments."—"Thou knowest him, perhaps!—I command thee again to tell me who thou art."—"Even in irons, I will not receive thy orders."—"Tremble!"—"I have already told thee that I fear no one"—"Wretch!—thou shalt perish!"—"My life is in thy power; but my secret is my own, my soul belongs to God, my heart to her whom I adore!"—"Thou art he! I doubt it no longer.—Farewell!—thou shalt see if Abdaral may be braved with impunity."—Hardly had he pronounced these words, when his daughter, shuddering with the dread of being discovered, withdrew in great haste.—Judge of the impression which this dreadful farewell of Abdaral made upon Pedro! What!—It was he! it was the father of her whom he adored!—He discovered it too late to call him, to demand of him the death which awaited him, and which was too slow

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for his desire..... He threw himself against the door, he wished to recall the barbarian; but a remembrance choked his voice, which died on his lips;—he must respect, even in death, the name of Almanza.——Perhaps she would have every thing to fear from her inflexible father, were he to know that Pedro had determined to die for her.—This thought arrested him, and calmed his frenzy. He fell again into a silent dejection, and resigned himself to his fate.

"How was Almanza, in the mean time, engaged in her chamber?—Buried in hopeless reflections, her head supported, her eye dejected and fixed upon a lamp which lighted it, she heard the noise of her father's guard, whom she had rapidly preceded. She dreaded his suspicions; she feared that if he should enter her apartment he would be surprised to find her with her eyes yet open. She approached her couch, not to seek there a sleep, which returned

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to her no more, but to ponder over the design which she had been meditating Her ardent and vigorous soul expanded and exalted itself yet more by the horror of her situation; and undecided solely respecting the details of her scheme, she prepared herself for putting it into execution. What then was her determination? Her father, almost certain that Pedro was in his power, had not been able to make himself quite sure upon this head.

"Ferocious as Abdaral might have been, he would not commit an useless crime; and, even in knowing that Pedro was his prisoner, who could he get to murder him? The commander of the tower, he could not himself stain his hands with the blood of his captive. Pedro had already, by his noble resignation, gained the esteem of the soldiers, and interested the whole of his guard in his situation. This Abdaral had been able to discover. Besides, the manners of the Moors were more

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chivalric than fierce. He would therefore with difficulty be able to find an assassin. Almanza knew her father too well to believe that he would execute all his projects. His head was, therefore, filled with schemes of vengeance which he was continually adopting and rejecting. Almanza saw that she had no means of delivering her lover but by impeaching him. Upon this she determined:—she gained over a woman of the name of Mirza, who had been attached to her from her birth; she confided to her the secret of her life, and intreated her to go and see her father.—As soon as Mirza was in the presence of Abdaral, she impeached Pedro without hesitation.

"Yes, my lord," she exclaimed, continuing a discourse, of which the beginning has little to interest, "with the appearance of treason against my mistress, a regard for her honour has alone brought me to you. It is indeed Pedro who is here in irons; I have certain

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proofs of it. He has, without the consent of my mistress, introduced himself into the city. I have learned from one of your cavalry, who met him in the engagement, that he hardly defended himself, and that his only design was to get himself taken, that he might be brought near to her he loved. During the retreat of our troops, he voluntarily entered with them within our walls. Nothing can more clearly prove his criminal views. I respect my mistress, and I am far from believing that she approves of his conduct; but our sex is weak. If the dreadful misfortune of Pedro, if——" "I understand thee, Mirza," interrupted Abdaral hastily; "and the service which thou renderest me cannot be too highly requited.—Receive these two bags of gold, and thy liberty—But do not permit thy care and thy zeal to rest here. I must get rid of this Pedro, this enemy of my country and of my religion, this villain who would ruin my daughter, and perhaps

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carry her off, to dishonour the name of my ancestors! I shiver with rage. Seek out from among some slaves, a man devoted to my interest, who will abridge the days of this Spaniard. Whatever reward he may demand, I promise and agree to give it to him." "My lord," replied Mirza, "you should not entrust the execution of your vengeance to too mean hands. Servitude weakens the courage of a slave, and leaves him none of those powers which are necessary in an undertaking of this importance. A soldier only can accomplish it. Understand, then, that, not doubting of the resolution you would take, when I had well assured myself of what I have just communicated to you, I secured beforehand an approved person who would undertake to obey your commands. He is a deserter, as brave as he is ambitious. All that he will demand of you will be that you will advance him. Pedro is his abhorrence. A Spaniard like himself, he has received from him ill usage;

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obliged to fly from Isabella's army, he is now in your service, and lays hold, with avidity, of this opportunity to revenge himself."—" Oh! thou most perfect of women, from thy sense and thy attachment"—said Abdaral, " how can I ever requite so great a service! Bring me here this deserter immediately."—" I cannot, at this time, my lord. He wishes to proceed to his task with the profoundest secrecy. The day begins to dawn;—let us wait till it closes. At night I will bring him here by a private door. He will be covered with his armour; you must give him your instructions, and the necessary orders for entering into the prison. The only thing he will demand of you will be, not to lift his visor in your presence. I will be present when he strikes his victim in silence;—when your intentions shall have been fulfilled, he consents that you should see him. I shall now retire:—This night, when the hour of eleven

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strikes, I shall be with you. Above all things, be alone;—keep at a distance every officious witness."

"The faithful Mirza returned to seek her mistress, and related to her the success of her embassy. But it was no difficult matter for Almanza to deceive her father's anger;—she must now strive to overcome the cruel resolution of Pedro, who sought, who wished, and who hoped for nothing but death; especially since, satisfied that his mistress knew of his being in the prison of Granada, he had not heard of her. Almanza felt, that, not having time to overcome him by persuasion, it was necessary thus to deceive him, in order to prolong his days in spite of himself. —How long did the day appear to the inhumanity of Abdaral, and to the tender solicitude of his daughter! and how slowly did the hours seem to the unfortunate Pedro to glide away! He waited with a painful impatience, arising from

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the terrible farewell of Abdaral;—life became to this wretched lover a burden too oppressive to bear.

"At length, this day, so tedious to all of them, closed. The eleventh hour strikes. Mirza went out, by a small door, from the palace. By the assistance of a secret ladder she ascended to Abdaral's apartment, followed by a warrior clothed in armour, with his visor drawn down over his face, ready to execute the sanguinary orders of this revengeful Moor.—But who is this warrior, this terrible instrument of the vengeance of a father?—The reader already knows that it is the heroic, the noble Almanza, who, under the habit of a soldier, with a mournful silence, a martial aspect, and an untoward look that gave full assurance of ferocity, thus dared to present herself before her father.' She attended to him without attempting to speak a word, and, on her knees, received the signed order for entering the prison of Pedro.

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" She did not tremble;—she arose, and by a single movement, by laying her hand on her long and formidable lance, she promised to obey, and disappeared with the rapidity of lightning. What joy for Almanza! she held in her hand the life and the liberty of her lover! The order required the governor to open the prison, and to give the warrior, to whom it was entrusted, full liberty to dispose of the prisoner of the tower. The gates of the city were likewise to open to this order on the side commanded by Abdaral. This Moor had himself thought that it would be better to have Pedro murdered out in the fields than stabbed in his dungeon, where his death could not have been concealed. Almanza already beheld herself without those dreadful walls, conducting back her dear Pedro towards the advanced post of Isabella's camp;—already, too, had she traversed the city with a velocity equal to the feeling which agitated her bosom.—She had entered

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the fort,—and approached the tower,—when one of Abdaral's attendants followed her, stopped her, and gave her the following note. "The event of this undertaking will not suffer me to rest in peace till I have received intelligence of it as certain as expeditious. I send to thee Acorat, my confidential attendant; he shall witness thy success, and go out with thee to the fields to bring me back information. His attendance by thee will make me yet more confident. If, from any unforeseen accidents, thou shouldst need his assistance, thou mayst depend upon him. His heart and his arm are known to me, and devoted to my service. Farewell: speed and secrecy."—What could become of Almanza!—All her plan was disconcerted. This Acorat was the most savage of men; and was well known to her. Alike insensible to interest, to fear, and to pity, he allowed her no hope. She could not, moreover, utter a single word without danger of being

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recognised by him. What part then could she take?—Her mind, unshaken in its perseverance, decided in a moment. Habituated to martial toils and dangers, she feared not, in the event, to have recourse to violence, should it become necessary, in order to complete her bold undertaking. She proceeded towards the tower without pronouncing a word. Acorat followed, astonished at her silence. She presented her order to the commandant of the post; and the drawbridge was let down. She approached the door of the prison;—Acorat was admitted with her.—The door was shut upon them. What a sight for Almanza!—Pedro, exhausted by fatigue, and more by grief, was buried in deep sleep. His paleness, and the discomposure of his features, pourtrayed all the sufferings of his mind.

"Let us profit by this moment," said the savage Acorat.—"Thy plan is to murder him in the fields; perhaps he may escape from us;—his sleep puts

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him in our power;—let us strike!—I will conceal his body from every eye; I will myself throw it from the summit of the precipice under which this tower is situated.'—At these words he brandished his cimeter—Almanza trembled;—she arrested his arm, feigned that she heard a noise, and made signs to him to listen at the door. Acorat, not suspecting her design, turned himself round—Almanza grasped her poniard, and plunged it into his heart.—— Acorat fell, covered with his blood;—he lifted himself up, and, with a feeble arm, attempted to lay hold of his cimeter again, but in vain. His enraged soul fled with his blood, which ran from him in copious streams.

"Pedro awoke; and beheld himself surrounded with blood, near a body which seemed yet struggling with death. Every thing appeared to prepare him for the fate to which he had been destined. With a noble and tranquil air, and casting a mournful look on Almanza, he

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offered himself to her blow.—What fortitude was it not necessary for Almanza to possess not to discover herself and run into his arms! But she must save Pedro; and fulfil what she owed to her duty and her love: she must deceive her lover. She knew the firm resolution which he had taken to die rather than not live for her. At the instant Pedro thought this unknown warrior was going to deprive him of an existence which he was far from wishing to defend, he saw him drop his arms before him, and, with a trembling hand, presenting a note to him. Pedro opened it with avidity; and, by the feeble light of a lamp suspended over his head, he read these words, written by the hand of Almanza herself.

"You have succeeded, Pedro. Your miseries are stronger than the resolutions of Almanza. Accept a life which she offers you, to preserve you to her. Follow this faithful warrior. He will conduct you without these fatal walls. Guide him

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yourself towards your tent;—Almanza will not delay to make her appearance before you.'—He kissed this happy note a thousand times; he placed it in his bosom, glowing with gratitude. He wished to throw himself into the arms of the generous warrior, to whom he owed much more than life, but he only experienced from him a reception as cold as the armour which he clasped in his arms; and the profoundest silence alone answered to his ardent conversation. He could not at all unravel this inexplicable behaviour. Every thing which he felt seemed to him only as a dream.—The warrior made signs to him to assist him in raising the body of Acorat, which was at their feet. They carried it to a small platform before the dungeon, and threw it into the immense abyss which was at the foot of the tower. The body, as it fell and rolled from rock to rock, rung from its weight and the dull clanking of the armour. The vaults

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of the fortress re-echoed from far its mournful sounds.

"Almanza soon regained the entrance of the fort;—Pedro followed her. Nothing opposed itself to their rapid march. All the guards obey them. The massy gates turn on their groaning hinges, and yield to the two lovers a free passage. The dawn began to appear as they passed the last mound. Soon they entered a small wood, which separated the glacis from the first advanced posts of Isabella's army. 'O! my friend, my deliverer,' exclaimed Pedro, 'what do I not owe to thy zeal, to thy intrepidity! Next to my Almanza thou art every thing to me. But why shouldst thou all along observe this cruel silence! Dost thou fear that I should recognise my benefactor? Do not any longer conceal thyself from me.' Almanza answered his earnest entreaties only by a silent wave of her head.—The camp soon displayed itself to their

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eyes; she seemed to ask of her lover towards what part they must direct their steps? 'At a hundred paces from here,' said Pedro, 'on that rising ground, is the post entrusted to my charge. I command the redoubt which defends the first approaches of the camp, which thou beholdest by the light of those fires almost extinguished.'—At these words Almanza paused, examined with profound attention the redoubt which Pedro had pointed to her, endeavoured to impress deeply in her memory both the place and every thing that surrounded it. She turned her eyes mournfully towards the ramparts of Granada, heaved a deep sigh, and went to separate herself from Pedro.—He hastily stopped her, and threw himself in her way; but Almanza persisted, and, with an impressive demeanour, forbad him to follow. 'Unkind!' exclaimed Pedro. 'What signifies to me this life, which I owe to thee, if thou deprive me of thyself, of Almanza, for whom alone I

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have consented to prolong my days? My eyes seek for her in vain—It is she that I require in preference to any other of the objects which surround me. Where is she? This note promises me—Where is she?—Oh! answer me!'—Almanza, with an aspect yet more commanding, viewed the redoubt which he had himself shewn her, and seemed to desire him to hasten there. What ought he to believe? May he hope to find Almanza there? Wavering and uncertain, he knew not what to hope, or what to determine. In spite of him, this mysterious warrior deceived him. He saw him depart—he wished to follow him, but a secret, involuntary impulse prevented him. At length he roused himself from his suspense, and intended to march in his footsteps. The warrior had now disappeared; and the closeness of the trees concealing him from his sight, left him no hope of finding him.

" Let us now follow Almanza, who

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returned to Granada before the day had yet altogether dissipated the shades of night. After so much anxiety, torment, and danger, she at length arrived at her father's house. The faithful Mirza waited for her. They both re-entered the palace:—Almanza disarmed herself. After much trouble she succeeded in breaking the sword, yet stained with Acorat's blood. Mirza took it, together with the bloody scarf of the Moor, and the helmet which had covered the lovely features of Almanza. They both thought it necessary that these mute witnesses should be found near the fort, in order that Abdaral might not make any enquiries respecting the events of the evening, or suspect Mirza of treachery. Mirza, with as much wisdom as promptitude, acquitted herself of this charge. Hardly had she returned to her mistress's chamber, when the first patrole, going out of the fort, discovered, near the gate, the broken sword, Almanza's helmet, and Acorat's

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scarf, and carried them to Abdaral. But what, in the mean time, engaged his unhappy daughter? Placed at the window of an elevated tower, contiguous to her apartment, and which overlooked the ramparts, she waited for the first rays of the morning to display to her Isabella's camp, that she might discover in the country the place marked by their unhappy separation, and the redoubt which Pedro commanded; where, at the same instant, Pedro thought every moment to see her, reperusing unremittingly the note which had given him so tender a hope. How she reproached herself for having deceived him! This was the first time that a falshood had been able to escape the thoughts or the pen of Almanza. But how excusable was she, even in the eyes of her lover! Already had the dawn gilded the hills; the sun had with splendour and majesty already appeared above the horizon; and his cheering light spread itself by degrees,

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and shone afar. Almanza had, from the first glimmering of the morning, sought the place so dear to her heart, and which she did not yet behold. At length the whole of Isabella's camp was laid open to her view. The whiteness of the tents, the gay colours of the flags which waved over them, the brilliant sparkling which shot from the heaps of arms, struck by the rays of the sun; all together dazzled the fatigued Almanza without enabling her to distinguish any thing. She presently recognised the wood which separated the camp from the city. This first point guided her; her eager eyes traced almost the steps she had trodden.—At length, the redoubt commanded by Pedro lay completely open to her view. O! sad and melancholy gratification! that she were ignorant rather of this fatal spot, where so many horrors were preparing for her!

"Buried in her reflections, despairing of the present, regardless of the future,

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and feeding her sorrowful eyes with a spectacle which rather distracted than comforted her—she suddenly heard a great noise; her father, accompanied by several Moorish chiefs, ascended into this tower, where solitude constituted the only enjoyment of Almanza. She arose to retire.—'Do not move, my daughter,' said Abdaral to her:—'we come to this place, which commands Isabella's camp, to concert a plan of attack. It is not before thee that we ought to be afraid of uttering our designs.'

"Almanza remained. Could she inform herself too perfectly of those cruel schemes which they were forming, and which might so deeply interest her heart? While the chiefs were consulting together, Mirza whispered to her mistress, that Abdaral had called her, in order to interrogate her; but that she had affected an entire ignorance of all the transactions; that, enraged at the loss of his attendant, he had not, neverthe-

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less, dared to make any enquiries respecting the unknown deserter, but that the uncertainty of the life or death of Pedro troubled and tormented him. Mirza was yet speaking when Almanza, attracted by the voice of her father, heard distinctly these dreadful words, which he addressed to one of the chiefs of the army.

'Yes, my dear and brave Alamar, since the expedition is entrusted to thee, we are assured of its success. At the twelfth hour of the night, thanks to the treachery of a Spanish soldier, this first redoubt, which strikes our sight, shall be destroyed. This soldier, assisted by some others, has dug under it a narrow passage, which they have filled with sulphur, pitch, and other inflammable materials. The explosion will be your signal. Your troops, distributed in silence around the camp, and especially in the wood which you see, shall, with torches in their hands, fall on the enemy's camp; and, pro-

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fiting by the confusion produced by this transaction, shall soon reduce to ashes that haunt whence the Spaniards would dictate laws to us. I will myself, by a fire which I shall kindle on the ramparts, give notice to the soldier to fire the fatal train at the hour appointed. He will have his eye continually fixed on our walls. Three seconds shall hardly transpire between the instant of my displaying this signal and that of the explosion, so favourable to our designs.'—

" What was the despair of Almanza in attending to this horrible scheme! The redoubt which Abdaral threatened was the very one commanded by Pedro. Its destruction appeared inevitable. No resource, no means appeared to preserve her lover from this impending danger. Ought she to betray the secret of her father, of the state?—It was, perhaps, the salvation of Granada, and of the whole army.—Ought she to suffer him to perish in so cruel a manner

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for whom she would a thousand times give her life, while one word might preserve him? What tumultuous fears arose at the same time in her heart! Her eyes grew dim, and her ideas became confused. It was the first time that her inflexible courage seemed to lose its energy. Hardly had Abdaral and the chiefs retired, when Almanza, lost in despair, and bathed in burning tears, threw herself into the arms of Mirza. It was here that love assumed over her all his power, and that this woman, so courageous, proved to be only a fickle lover, following no counsel, but the rage and the disorder of her passions.—What a dreadful day followed! One hour was too long for so violent a state; and yet she must pass it in such agonies. Twenty times did Almanza recal her faithful confidant, and twenty times command her to depart. A thousands chemes were planned, and abandoned. At length this terrible day closed. The veil of

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night seemed to thicken, in order to cover the designs of the Moors. They are already on their way, marching in the dark, without noise, and conducted by sure guides. They filled the wood which divided the camp from the glacis; and some of them, creeping through the thick bushes, are already near the out-posts of the Spaniards; and, ready to rise at the signal, burning to fall upon Isabella's soldiers. The most perfect tranquillity pervaded the camp; every one appeared buried in profound sleep. Pedro alone watched. He could not imagine how Almanza should have deceived him, even in order to save his life. Where could she be? Who was the warrior who had rendered him so essential a service? A thousand confused ideas succeeded one another in his mind. He had passed the day in torments not to be described; the night had arrived to add to the horror of his situation. Far from participating in the ardour and the joy of his comrades on

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his return, he tore himself suddenly from their embraces to shut himself up in his tent, and ponder over his misfortunes. He could not support the agitation which consumed him. He went out, in spite of the darkness of the night; he wandered far, and proceeded, hesitating whether he should not again throw himself into the hands of his enemies. He involuntarily approached the thicket where he beheld his deliverer depart. At length, weighed down by fatigue and by grief, he fell at the foot of an old oak, exhausted by the burden of his pains and his reflections.

" What, in the mean time, became of Almanza? Appalled by the blackest prospects, feeling that she was soon to fulfil her fatal destiny, she took again with haste the arms which she had but just put off; and expecting that her father might be occupied far from her with the dreadful expedition he

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was preparing, she embraced, for the last time, her dear Mirza, stole from her, and forced herself away against her intreaties and her tears. At the time the soldiers were passing under the portcullis, raised over the drawbridge, she mingled with their number, and, in the dark, quitted their ranks when they had entered the wood, where she had formerly had the courage to tear herself from the arms of Pedro.

"The Spanish soldiers, as well as the Moors, scattered among the intricate passages of this thicket, left her every thing to fear. She marched on, however, at all hazards.—Suddenly her feet struck against a lance, leaning against a tree. She went to seize it;—a hand violently retained it;—a sword glittered.—Could Almanza suppose that it was the formidable cimeter of Pedro?—She placed herself in a posture of defence;—and a most dreadful combat

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ensued. They sought, they lost, and soon refound each other, and seemed equally desirous of dealing death, and little troubled about receiving it. At length they closed; they attacked, and thrust at one another by the feeble light of the moon. Pedro, recognising the plume of the enemy, redoubled his efforts;—he was going to obtain a horrible victory;—but, in their most furious onset, the noise of the combat having alarmed a neighbouring post, they heard the soldiers tumultuously approaching. Almanza, afraid of being surrounded, obliged to surrender, and of being recognised, would sacrifice her life, but wished to preserve her honour. She fled from her adversary, who pursued her, sought her in vain, and lost her in the darkness.—Wandering at random, she tried to find out the path which led to Pedro's tent. In this uncertain march what cruel thoughts oppressed her!—The fatal hour ap-

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proached; would she arrive time enough to save her lover? She hesitated;—she feared that the steps she was taking only led her away from this dear object. O! unhappy maid!—She knew not that she fled from him in wishing to join him; that it was his breast she had but that instant endeavoured to pierce; and that the very moments lost in the combat were those which would cost him his life! Invoking heaven and love, she followed at length the path which her instinct and her memory pointed out to her: sometimes she hastened, sometimes she slackened her pace. Suddenly she thought she discovered that she had mistaken the way:—her fears, her anxiety, her despair are at the full! She dared not listen; she feared to hear that dreadful hour strike, the sound of which, from the nearness of the city, might be conveyed to her ears;—at length the horror of her situation surpassed all de-

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scription!—Whilst her mind was torn by the struggles of despair and of fear, that of Pedro was not less wretched. Enraged at seeing his enemy escape, he pursued him for a considerable time:—at length the idea of his duty arrested his course. He considered that his post might be attacked, since he had discovered an enemy so near the camp. He trembled lest he should not arrive in time to defend it, and returned with rapidity to his fatal redoubt. Alas! cruel fate conducts, without difficulty, the victim towards the perils which await him, and arrests the steps of her who would deliver him. At length, however, after a long and wearisome course, a happy chance conducted Almanza near Pedro's tents. The thickness and the depth of the wood had alone rendered her footsteps uncertain:—the fires of the camp now light her. She drew near to it:—she was stopped at the first embankment by a signal of peace:—she gave them

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to understand that her designs were not hostile.—She wished to speak to Pedro:—they ran to apprize him; but they detained her at the head of the advanced post. Alas! how much did these requisite delays cause her to suffer; agitate and distract her! Her heart told her that there remained hardly a moment for her to save her Pedro.—This idea forced her away:—she tore herself from the hands of those who held her, and leaped the entrenchments, exclaiming—'Fly all of you, unfortunate men, fly!—the fire is under your feet!'—Pedro could not yet hear her:—she ran into his tent, threw down her helmet, and essayed to speak—but had not power;—she fell down senseless. Already her lover is at her feet;—he pressed her to his heart, and felt nothing but happiness!—But the moment approached;—the Spanish deserter, placed near the train laid in a concealed spot, with a torch in his hand, waited in silence to receive the fatal signal!—

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The hour struck—the fire is light on the ramparts—it is the torch of death!—It struck the first sight of Almanza as she revived:—she saw that hardly a moment remained for them; 'Come,' said she, clasping the body of Pedro, 'there is no more hope:—receive the soul of thy Almanza!'—So saying she fixed her burning lips on his.—Surprised, intoxicated—he answered her transports by ardent kisses; but the lighted match was in the mean time placed to the subterranean pitch; a dreadful explosion burst the ground, and lifted the redoubt in atoms! The two lovers, locked in each other's arms, were annihilated in this horrid ruin, and their souls, united together, escaped at the same instant!

"At this moment, the Moorish soldiers fell upon the Spanish camp; and availing themselves of the confusion into which their terror had thrown it, and armed with fire, they encircled it in a thousand places at once:—the flame ex-

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tended and devoured every thing;—a fatal blaze dissipated the darkness of the night, and seemed to enlighten at the same time the despair of the Spaniards, the vengeance of the Moors, and the courage of Almanza."

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NOTES*.

ADAM AND EVE.

THE Rabbins relate rather a pleasant fable respecting the etymology of the word Eve.

"Eve," say they, "is derived from a word which signifies "to prattle." The first woman took this name for the following reason;—when God had created the world, he threw down from heaven twelve baskets filled with prattle; the woman gathered up nine of them, whilst her husband had hardly time to collect the other three."

If we may credit some oriental historians, Eve had a rival.

"Adam," they write, "lived two hundred and thirty years with another woman named Lilith, who had been made of impure earth; and demons were the fatal progeny of this adultery."

They relate another absurd story, to which the prophecy of Enoch has given some colour.

* I owe a great part of these notes to the researches of an English writer, translated (into French) by M. de Cantwell.

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"Cain, after his crime, lived in the valley. The family of Seth, distinguished by its virtues, remained, with Adam, on the mountain. But the inhabitants of the mountains, having one day beheld dances beneath them, descended, and fell in love with the women of the valley, and had commerce with them;—and hence arose the mixture of virtue and vice." The prophecy of Enoch, on the other hand, represents the women of the valley as so very beautiful that God committed the charge of them to the angels, who suddenly became enamoured of them. From the celestial and terrestrial union, say they, proceeded the giants, who pursued their pleasures in human flesh, and in a short time peopled the earth.

God precipitated them into the grand abyss with the archangels.

Another oriental fable relates, that the rebellious angels declared war against the supreme Being; that they married the daughters of men; that from this union sprung the demons; and that God, incensed by so many crimes, resolved to rid the earth of them by means of the deluge.

According to all these accounts the women were always the causes of evil; whence we may easily discover the principles of the ancients, who ever calumniated them.

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FROM the deluge to the time of Abraham there appears a wide blank in the history of women.

Our first shepherds did not despise any employments: Gideon and Amurath applied their hands to the labours of housekeeping and husbandry. Abraham, in order to entertain the angels properly, went himself and took a calf from his herd, skinned it, and gave it his wife to dress*. The princes of antiquity took the same trouble as Abraham, and the princesses applied themselves to cookery †.

The women were at this time charged to grind the corn. As mills were unknown, they bruised it between two stones; two women were employed at this work even in the time of Jesus Christ. "Two women," says he, "shall be grinding at the mill, the one shall be taken and the other left."

The principal employment of the women was spinning;—they made use of the distaff and the spindle.

* This is not exactly true; "Abraham ran unto the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, *and gave it unto a young man*; *and* he *hasted to dress it*." Gen. xviii. 7.

† See Homer.

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It seems, as I have observed in the text, that the amusements of the women were confined to some dances and songs. The more we enquire respecting this subject, the more we are obliged to think that the women were then condemned to so many employments that the cessation from labour on the days of rest was their chief pleasure.

The wives of the patriarchs suckled their own children. The concubines complied, likewise, with this custom. It was adopted, too, by the Egyptians, the Canaanites, the Scythians, the Medes, and the Persians.

The men had at that time the power of repudiating their wives, without assigning any other reason than their good pleasure. They had also the right of annulling all the oaths, vows, and engagements of their daughters and their wives, provided they had not been present at the time of making them; for in such case their opposition ought to have been then signified, as their silence passed for a notification of their assent.

Nothing can more clearly prove to us, than these customs, the slavery to which the women were reduced. We perceive that even their thoughts and their secret inclinations were subject to the men. This barbarism was more excusable in these primeval ages of ignorance than the injustice of the laws against women established in more enlightened periods.

The Rabbins are fond of fabulous origins. They

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pretend that Noah, at the particular request of Adam himself, carried his body into the ark, and, by this holy barrier, separated the women from the men; hence, say they, the custom of confining the women.

We can discover, in these first ages, nothing worthy of the title of "golden," which has been applied to them. Abraham and Isaac were continually afraid of being assassinated for their wives; and the oath which they exacted from their neighbours, not to attempt their lives, savoured little of a golden age.

THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS AND THE CHINESE.

THE ancient Egyptians are the only people among whom we discover, at this period, any traces of study and education. The priests taught the sciences, and, among others, astronomy. It is supposed that the women were not excluded. Many of them prophesied from dreams, and from the prodigies which they observed in the air.

It is believed that the ancient Egyptians prohibited their women to learn music; because, say they, "this art relaxes the springs of the mind." The Israelites differed from them on this head. Moses frequently mentions celebrated female

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singers. As the Egyptians were a wise people, and as they had thought proper to entrust many employments to the women, we cannot doubt but that they paid considerable attention to their education.

Without having any certain proofs, it seems that the Phœnicians and Babylonians followed, in this respect, the system of the ancient Egyptians.

In China, on the contrary, we have reason to conclude, that the men were more solicitous to render their women chaste than to instruct them.

There is no deficiency in history respecting the amusements of the Egyptians. They evidently consisted principally in religious festivals, where the women carried flowers, garlands, and symbolical signs. They likewise celebrated with great pomp the day of their birth.

Polygamy was not allowed among the ancient Egyptians. Virgins were protected by the law. Any man who violated a girl, or a free woman, was, by a painful operation, effectually prevented from being again guilty of a like offence.

It is pretty generally believed that the Egyptians had more respect for their queens than for their kings; and that, in their marriage contracts, the husband promised obedience to his wife. Without being well assured as to this fact, what proves more than all the consideration in which the Egyptians held their women, is the law which

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charged the girls, and not the boys, to provide for the sustenance of their infirm or indigent parents.

One fact more offers itself in support of this opinion. When Solomon married the daughter of Pharaoh, contrary to the common laws, he built for her a separate palace, and allowed her the particular rites of her religion, which was directly contrary to the laws of the Israelites.

Some ancient nations had but little respect for chastity. It is related that the Babylonians had a law, whereby every woman was obliged to go to the temple once in her life, and to prostitute herself with the first stranger who should salute her, and who, for form sake, presented her with a piece of money, which she was obliged to accept. When a woman was not handsome, she remained in the temple to no purpose, as no stranger would think of her.

I shall here transcribe a passage from scripture, which seems to allude to this law. "The women, with cords about them, sitting in the ways, burn bran for perfume; but if any of them, drawn by some that passeth by, lie with him, she reproacheth her fellow, that she was not thought as worthy as herself, nor her cord broken*."

Modesty is singularly honoured in China. A Chinese female considers it a violation of all the laws of chastity to expose her bare hand. All

* Baruch vi. 43.

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their laws are calculated to make virtue respected. The police commands the prostitutes not to reside within the walls of great cities, that they might not be a reproach to the virtuous women.

We find in history incontrovertible proofs of the incontinence of women. Pheron, the successor of Sesostris, the first king of Egypt, having lost his sight, the oracle pronounced that he could only recover it by rubbing his eyes with the spittle * of a woman who had never violated the conjugal faith. Thousands of trials failed; but at length an old countrywoman rendered him this service.

Another Egyptian king, named Chemmis, having no materials left for carrying on an immense pyramid which he was erecting, ordered his own daughter to grant her favours to all those who should convey a large stone to the spot where they were building it. The stones arrived in such quantities that there remained a sufficient number to erect a small pyramid in honour of the princess who had procured them.

Whether these anecdotes be or be not apocryptal, as the Egyptians, in their tales, made use of allegories to correct vice, they, at any rate, by their aim, shew us to what degree their manners were depraved.

* Urine, according to Herodotus. He likewise states that Pheron put his wife to death from thus finding her to have been incontinent, and married the woman whose urine proved successful.

TRANSLATOR.

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THE Greeks never applied themselves with much care to the education of their women. In the Andromache of Euripides, Peleus reproaches Menelaus with the bad education of Helen. But this defect was universal among the Greeks; and Helen was not alone in this respect. The more we consider their manners, the more reason we have to believe that the Greeks sought that their wives should be calculated to give to the republic children of robust constitutions, rather than possess all the other qualities by which this sex engages our affections.

This people, the most intelligent in the world, delighted in suffering their women to remain in ignorance.

We find, among the Greek women, one exception to this general ignorance; so true is it that this sex, even in those times when it has been attempted in a measure to annihilate its power, has manifested unequivocal proofs of its superior qualities.

Areta, the daughter of Aristippus, taught, from his time, sciences and philosophy to her son, who for this reason received a surname (Μητροδίδακτος) which signified "the disciple of his mother." At Thebes the celebrated Corinna, surnamed the Lyric Muse, five times carried away the palm

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from Pindar: Aspasia, the noble Milesian, instructed Pericles.

The Greek women were commonly occupied in embroidery and spinning, and had a working place contiguous to their apartment. When they were modest and chaste their husbands charged them with all the expences of the house.

There was a festival in Greece, during the celebration of which the women were empowered to seize the old batchelors, to drag them round the altar, and to beat them.

The Lacedæmonian matrons were very noted for the education of their children. Warriors and legislators, the most renowned, congratulated themselves on having sucked the milk of Lacedæmonian nurses.

In order that the apartments of the Greek women might be the less accessible, they were lodged in the highest places, on the back part of the houses. Such was the habitation of the beautiful Helen: and Penelope, it is said, descended from her chamber by a ladder. When the women had become mothers, a little more liberty was granted to them; but until then their guardians did not suffer them to walk abroad *.

A Greek woman, who lost her husband, fell under the care of her own son. She could not make a will, or do any similar act, without the signature of her guardian.

* See Menander and Aristophanes.

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It is sufficiently understood that the laws of Solon allowed to all the young Greeks who were handsome, and of good constitutions, to live for some days with the wives of those whose persons and imbecility did not promise to the state handsome children.

The Spartans, during their war against the Messenians, having sworn not to re-enter their ramparts until the war should be terminated, and fearing that the population would by this means be injured, sent other Greeks to their wives to supply their absence. According to other accounts, the customs were more favourable, and less injurious to the women.

They held, for a considerable time, a right to vote in the assemblies. They inherited with their brothers by an equal division, and the whole of the inheritance fell to them when they were alone; but under the hard condition of marrying their nearest kinsman. It is true, that if this kinsman were old and infirm, and if they did not, within a time fixed, bear him children, they were at liberty to make another choice. This very facility assumes a complexion at once insulting to the women, and degrading to manners.

It is a remarkable circumstance, that the more the Greeks raised in celebrity the less they lived in the society of the women.

In Greece the women wore their mourning for a long time; while it lasted they denied themselves all kind of pleasures, and occupied themselves

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every day in depositing some new offering on the tombs of their husbands. They cut off their hair and burned it on the funeral piles. They were seen running along the streets in disorder, and tearing their faces, with every expression of despair.

The Greek women were much occupied at their toilet. The Grecian ladies passed there the whole of the forenoon. They washed their faces with waters which brightened the complexion; they painted their eyebrows, and placed a salve on their lips, the brightness of which was admirable.

The Greeks, having but few opportunities of getting near the women, employed singular method to apprise them of their passion: they wrote their names on the walls of their houses; decorated the door with garlands; and poured there libations of wine. When a woman wove a garland in her turn, she was deemed to partake of the love which she had inspired. When a Greek failed by these means to please, he employed love-potions.

The Thessalonians were considered as being very skilful in the composition of them. These potions were so strong that they affected the reason, and sometimes produced fatal consequences. They also made use of a little figure representing the object beloved. This they placed before the fire; it was considered that the more it was heated the more would the heart of

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the beloved fair he enflamed.—When a Greek had been able to steal any thing belonging to the person he loved, he buried it at the door, and, from that moment, he considered himself as sure of pleasing her.

THE ROMANS.

The greatness of mind which many Romans displayed on several occasions depended essentially on their education, which tended to inspire them with the enthusiasm of noble and virtuous sentiments.

The use of the bath was, at Rome, constant. The women bathed at first in places set apart for them; but soon afterwards the two sexes bathed together;—the customs varied with the manners. The Roman women, like the Greeks, passed their lives in a state of subjection to their husbands. The privileges granted by the Romans to the Sabines were only the effect of gratitude, and had but a transient influence.

The senate, after the negotiation between the Romans and the Sabines, conducted by their women, refrained from holding any obscure conversation before them; it ordered the path to be ceded to them on the public roads; their children were distinguished by a golden ball, which hung

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suspended on their breast, and by the robe called *pretexta**, which they wore to a certain age.

The Romans had the power of life and death over their children. On returning them their portions, they repudiated their wives at pleasure.

Sometimes the Romans transferred to their principal slave a right to chastise their wives. The emperor Justinian is one instance. His chief eunuch had the boldness to threaten the empress.

The Romans appear to have been all of them very capricious in the treatment of their women; sometimes honouring, and sometimes degrading them.

The institution of the vestals in Rome is, perhaps, one of the circumstances which reflects most honour on the virtue of the women.

When a vestal met a criminal led to punishment, he obtained pardon, provided she made oath that the meeting was perfectly accidental. The Roman censors held the right of scrutinizing the conduct of all the world at Rome, and to punish the crimes of citizens of every rank, with the exception of the two consuls, the prefect of the city, and the oldest vestal. The principal magistrates, even the consuls themselves, if they met a vestal, were obliged to turn out of her way. The least injury done to a vestal was pu-

* *Toga pretexta.*

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nished with death. They were the only women who were admitted as evidence in courts of justice. Their priestesses were resorted to with respect as umpires in disputes. They intrusted to them the care of wills and of valuable family deeds.

The Roman ladies partook of the titles and honours of their husbands. It was only by degrees that they were admitted to the entertainments of the men.

The emperor Heliogabalus wished his wife to have a voice in the senate. He shortly afterwards established a senate of women, who decided upon the modes and fashions of every kind. This ridiculous senate expired with its founder.

Almost all the homage which the Romans deigned to render to the women was the offspring more of esteem than of love.

In the first ages of Rome, and in the happier years of the republic, the Romans were so scrupulous in their regard for chastity that they erased Manlius from the list of senators for having connected himself with his wife in the presence of his daughter.

They slighted and despised the gay and licentious women, but awarded the greatest honours to those whose virtue was unimpeachable. At the time of the dissolution of manners they were as eager in restraining vice as they had been to crown virtue.

The first Greeks, like the first Romans, living

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at a distance from the women, retained, for a long while, their savage fierceness. The Romans acquired from the rape of the Sabines the first idea of associating with the women, who insensibly softened their manners.

The head-dress of the Roman ladies resembled, in many particulars, that of the present day. They placed in their hair pins and combs, surrounded by rings, precious stones, and white and purple ribands.

It seems that they distinguished by the head-dresses, which announced virtue and modesty, and which coquetry and debauchery.

The women employed every possible means to soften their skins. Poppæa, the wife of Nero, used every morning the milk of fifty asses for her bath.

An author asserts, that they invented a kind of composition which hardened on the skin, but which they easily washed off with milk. This auxiliary to beauty was of a bright white, and soon became the reigning fashion.

The tunics of the women were made of very fine wool. The use of linen was only introduced under the emperors. As to silk, it was for a long while so scarce that the emperor Justinian, when his wife asked him to buy for her a silk cloak, replied to her, "I will take good care not to exchange a pound of gold for a pound of silk."

Henry the Fourth, against the advice of Sully, established, with great trouble, silk manufactures in

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France. The taste of Gabrielle for silks contributed to their introduction.

Henry the Second of France wore the first pair of silken hose that were seen in Europe; and Elizabeth of England received a pair of black silken hose as a great curiosity. Since this time the manufactories have multiplied without number.

SAVAGES.

The savages of America, willing to allow as much courage to the women as to the men, frequently fasten together the arms of their son and daughter, and burn them alike, to discover which of them can best support pain. Commonly, they assert, the daughter evinces most firmness.

Among all savages, universally, the condition of women is truly melancholy. Among some savage hordes on the coasts of Guinea, the men do not allow the women to appear before them without falling on their knees.

It is known that in Circassia the parents rear their daughters with much care, with the design of selling them.

Some savage tribes likewise sell their daughters to foreigners.

When the Spaniards landed in South America, the women were so wretched that they ran to them, preferring the uncertainty of their fate with

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foreigners, to the horror of their situation in the bosom of their country.

Among the Hurons and the Iroquois we discover a little more humanity exercised towards the women, and even some respect for their matrons. Among the Natchez, the women have at times attained to supreme authority. The Arabian and Tartar women are more happy. They are so fond of dress that their husbands seek to procure it for them. With the exception of his horse, an Arabian will sell every thing to buy jewels for his wife.

In some parts of the coast of Guinea the women have a voice in the deliberative assemblies.

In the tribe of the Pholies, on the shores of the Niger, the men enjoy with the women all the comforts of society.

The savages have the power to change their wives, but they, almost generally, have only one at a time.

In North America the women are charged with the punishment of the prisoners of war. It is impossible to form an idea of their barbarity, particularly when their husbands have fallen in the engagement; they then fix no limits to their cruelty.

In savage countries, where the chastity of the women is a necessary virtue, they are inviolably faithful to their husbands. Their revenge is implacable; but nothing can set bounds to the effects of their gratitude.

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The historian of the Rouconiers of America states, that when a woman is a widow she is obliged for one year to carry provisions to the tomb of her husband; and, after the year has transpired, to take his bones, to wash them, to carry them on her back, and to sleep with them. One has some difficulty in believing such absurd barbarity.

THE BARBARIANS.

The Scandinavian women were the first who, by their manners and their education, enjoyed in Europe a becoming respect.

Among the Druses of Mount Libanus, the women are entrusted with the depositaries of the mysteries, and with the precepts which their books contain.

The Scythians had a law which condemned the son to partake of the punishment of his father; but the daughter was exempted.

The German women inherited the throne. The most renowned warriors did not disdain to fight under the banners of a woman, and to obey her orders.

When the Gauls fled before their enemies, the women threw themselves at their feet, and their voices brought them back to the combat.

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The Goths, by their laws, obliged every one who debauched a virgin to marry her, if she were of the same rank with himself. But if she were of an inferior class, the ravisher was compelled to insure her a fortune.

The Britons had, likewise, great veneration for their women. They submitted to all the oppressions of the Romans until they began to lay their hands on their queens and their virgins; this last outrage it was impossible for them to bear, and they revolted.

The authority of the husband was, among the Germans, unlimited. When a woman had been guilty of adultery, her husband assumed the functions of accuser, judge, and executioner; he had a right to assemble his family, to cut off the hair of the unfaithful fair in its presence; he afterwards stripped her, and led her with great lashes to the end of the city.

Among the Angles, the laws fixed the rates of insults and injuries. Whoever insulted a virgin paid double of what he would have been obliged to do had he insulted a man of the same rank.

The mythology of the ancients abounds in female divinities. The Hebrews adored "the queen of heaven." The Phœnicians the goddess Astarte, the Scythians rendered homage to Appia, and the Scandinavians to Friggia, the wife of the great Odin.

At the time the barbarians of the North, without restraint and without morals, occupied them-

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selves in conquest and rapine, the women were confined more through prudence than jealousy; for they could not venture abroad without dreading some outrage. As soon as a woman had a lover or a husband, she went out without any apprehension, under the care of her protector. Hence sprung the first notions of chivalry, by which bravery was devoted to the cause of beauty.

The women did not, among hardly any of the nations of the North, inherit the right of succession. It seems that in those times of barbarism they imagined that a feeble being should not possess that which it could not defend. Nevertheless, the Bourguignons and some others gave way to this custom.

Among the Francks, when a father wished to treat his daughter like a son, he carried her before the judge, and said to her; "My dear child, an ancient and barbarous custom excludes the daughters from the inheritance of their fathers; but as I hold all my children equally from Providence, I ought to love them equally; I declare, therefore, my dear child, that it is my will that thou share my inheritance equally with thy brother."

The manners of the Scythians were less corrupt than those of any other people; nevertheless, having, during a military expedition, tarried a long while in Asia, their wives, tired of their absence, connected themselves with the slaves left to guard them. The Scythians being on their return, the slaves wished to dispute with their masters both

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their property and their wives. The battle was begun, and was for a long time of uncertain issue. The Scythians, indignant at this resistance, attacked the slaves unarmed, but with whips and sticks. The very sight of these instruments, the badges of their slavery, intimidated these vile rivals, and they threw down their arms, and took the consequence.

THE WOMEN OF ASIA.

EVERYWHERE, except in Asia, the condition of women has undergone some changes. But in this country they have been, and will doubtless ever continue to be, slaves.

The Persians are, of all the Asiatics, the most jealous people, and those who treat their wives with the greatest severity, in not allowing them a moment of liberty.

The Tartars grant them, at least, some hours for bathing; and, according to their rank, they allow them the jewels and the ornaments which they desire. But in Persia their slavery is carried to the extreme; it is true that the women have not, in other respects, any thing to complain of.

In China, the emperor may marry the daughter of the most obscure of his subjects, and the empress enjoys equally with himself all the honours due to her rank. The women in this country can-

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not, according to some, possess any property. The object of this law is, that the choice of a wife should proceed from the attractions of love, and not from those of wealth.

It appears, from the accounts of some travellers, that the Chinese conceal much gallantry under a modest exterior.

Although the Brahmins confine their wives to a strict seclusion, they treat them with so much respect and tenderness, that they imitate the purity of their manners.

A navigator asserts, that in the island of Otaheite, polygamy being allowed, the men have established a society under the name of *Darreoy*. All the women are here in common. When a child is born, it is immediately stifled, that the pleasures of the mother may not be interrupted. If her tenderness for her child should induce her to wish to save it, one of the men must declare himself to be its father; but the man and the woman are both in such case driven from the society

An ancient law in Persia allowed the queen to obtain from the king any request which she should think proper to make him on the day of her birth. Amestris required her husband to deliver up to her a woman whom she detested; she cut off her nose, her breasts, her ears, her lips, and her tongue, which dogs devoured in the presence of the unfortunate victim. In few countries have the manners of the women been more dissolute than in Persia. The reign of Ahasuerus exceed-

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ed, in this respect, all that is most vile in debauchery.

The noted dancers of India have the precaution to secure their breasts in a kind of boxes, made of a wood so fine as to yield to the undulations of their breasts, and thus prevent them from sinking, without injuring their delicacy.

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